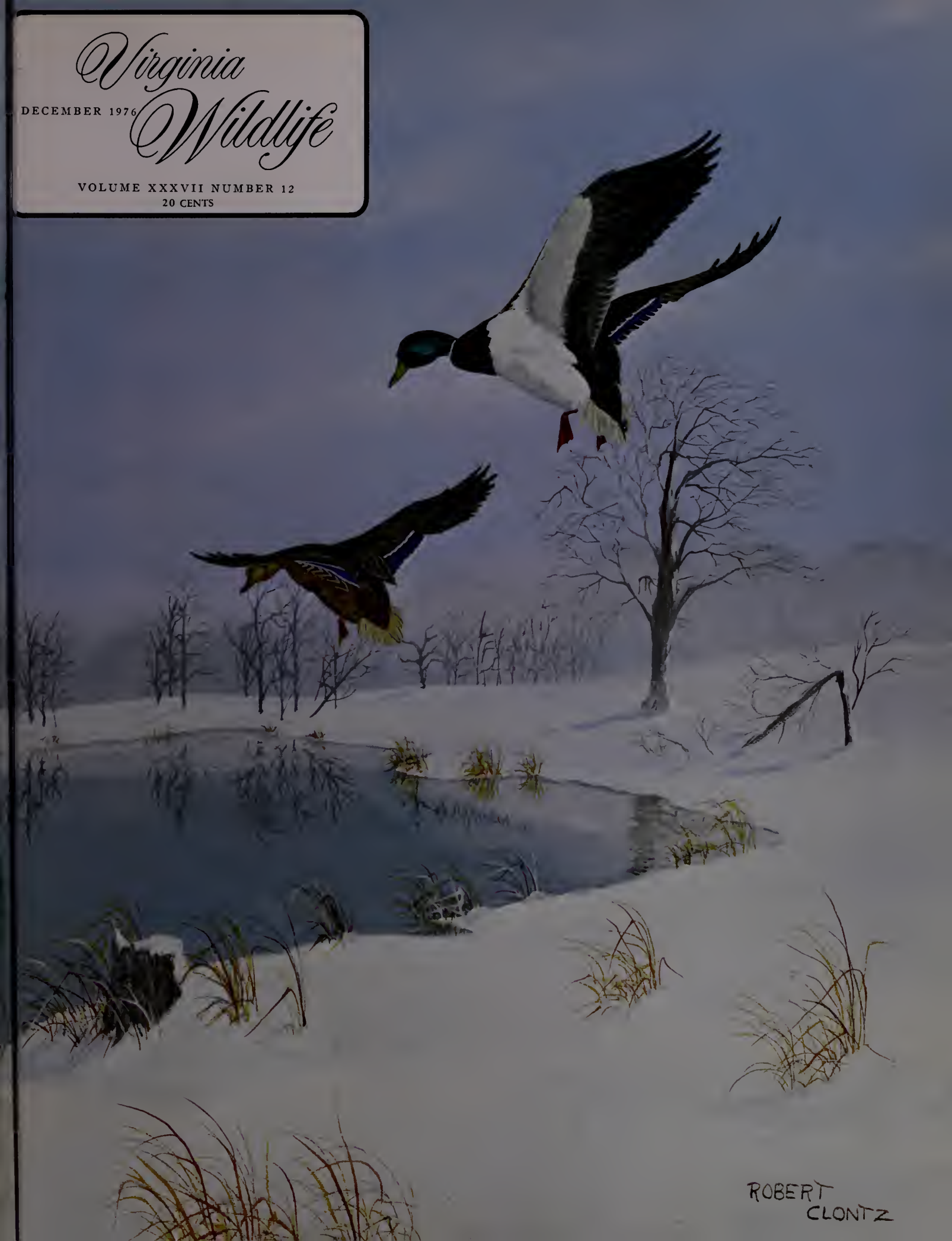


Virginia

DECEMBER 1976

Wildlife

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20 CENTS



ROBERT  
CLONTZ

# Virginia Wildlife

December, Volume XXXVII/No. 12

Dedicated to the Conservation of Virginia's  
Wildlife and Related Natural Resources

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
MILLS E. GODWIN, JR., GOVERNOR

Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries

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# Editorial

## WILDLIFE TOUCHES EVERYONE'S LIFE

Think about it! Almost every family has someone who hunts or fishes and these pursuits influence the lives of those around this person. Nearly all families at some time have the opportunity to eat game or fish. All of us see at least some wildlife, if only in the backyard or out the windshields of our cars.

Managing a resource which affects each of Virginia's 5 million people is big responsibility for the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries. Through application of science and skill our wildlife resources have been brought through some pretty rough times to survive in record or near record numbers. However, since agricultural practices, forestry practices, land development and water policies, over which the Game Commission has no control, drastically affect wildlife, persons engaged in these areas must also share the

responsibility to the people of Virginia to give wildlife proper consideration.

A few muskrats in a marsh can't supply the jobs or the tax base of a multimillion dollar industrial plant. The muskrats can't move but perhaps the factory could so we would have both the muskrats and economic progress. Many consider any change a threat, but properly directed change can be beneficial. After all, controlled change is what brought our wildlife populations from the near-extinction of the 1900's to today's abundance. Man can no longer be eliminated from ecological processes. Rather than to consider this unrealistic approach it is better to calculate his influence and include it in the management plans. Man is a major influence on this planet and to pretend he does not exist is like ignoring the sun or the rain.

—HLG

## Letters

### DEER DAMAGE DILEMMA

Why is it that hunters or farmers in counties or certain areas are allowed to shoot deer in the summer on farms that claim to have crop damage with deer overpopulation? I agree that there are farms that have some crop damages, but why can't these farmers be issued extra permits to kill the excess crop-damaging deer in the fall or winter, rather than in the summer when they have little fawns that are left in the woods to die?

Charles E. Greene  
Blackstone

*The Game Commission does have special tags that are issued to farmers experiencing crop damage. These "extra deer" tags may be sold or given to hunters in the fall allowing them to kill an extra deer on that farm. Unfortunately, many farmers aren't content to wait. A dead deer doesn't eat any more soya beans. —Ed.*

### STRICT STRIPPERS

I have enjoyed immensely each issue so far received, and I always have a feeling of optimism regarding Virginia's environmental quality after putting your magazine down. However, I would like to see an article exert some pressure on the General Assembly for stricter Reclamation laws on strip mining in Southwestern Virginia.

Champe Brockenbrough Green  
Blacksburg

### 1977 COMMISSION MEETINGS

9:30 A.M.

4010 West Broad Street  
Richmond, Virginia

January 14, 1977

February 25, 1977

April 15, 1977

### BADGERED BIRDS

For the past two years the United States Coast Guard came through the Little Wicmico River in Northumberland County destroying all osprey nests on river buoys. Recognizing that the osprey has survival problems, the local commercial fishermen and many others are disturbed by what's happening.

Marian F. Mallory  
Richmond

*Osprey nest in the spring so the young are flying and quite capable of making it on their own by middle to late summer when navigation aids receive their annual cleaning. Although removal of the nest may disturb the birds slightly it seems to be no permanent deterrent since another year produces a new crop of nests. —Ed.*

### BIRD BANS BAFFLING

While reading your publication of summary of Virginia Game Laws, 1976 Season, I came across two statements which I do not understand. To hunt quail in the snow and to take migratory birds with a rifle are unlawful. I would like to know why the above statements are unlawful.

Raymond Reeder  
Williamsburg

*The snow law has been on the books in Virginia for many years supposedly to prevent slaughtering snow bound coveys which often find their way to cleared areas such as roads and to prevent scattering coveys in deep snow where they might not be able to get back together. The ban on rifles for migratory birds is a federal law to prevent sky busting or ground sluicing concentrated flocks from great distances — dangerous and not very sporting. —Ed.*

### WE GOOFED!

We failed to credit the author and photographer who created the November 1976 Virginia Wildlife back cover. Newton Ancarrow of Richmond is an avid researcher of wildflowers, and has allowed Virginia Wildlife to run a series of his photographs.

What is a

# Finch?



By LULA P. GIVENS

TREE SPARROW

*Photos by L. L. Rue*

Old man winter comes early in southwest Virginia, and does not hesitate to let everyone know he is there. Snow lays thick underfoot for many weeks, and a cold wind howls eerily up the small ravine behind the house. However, the unusual bird I saw in the box-elder tree one winter day seemed undaunted by wind or weather. Since moving into this wooded section, I had seen other unusual birds, a flock of black and white warblers, a pair of pileated woodpeckers and once a scarlet tanager chasing a blue jay. But none of the past visitors could rival the black and gold beauty of this "new" bird. And the unknown creature was not alone; he brought along a whole flock.

I was later able to identify my unknown winter visitors as evening grosbeaks, migratory members of the finch family. The male is about eight inches long with a chunky robin-sized body of antique gold. His wings are black and white, longer than his black-notched tail. The bird's back looks white when the wings are closed, but when they are spread in flight, the entire back shines a golden yellow.

The female of the species is a smoky gray with a darker head. Her wings and tail are black; her throat, abdomen and undercoverts, white. Only the back of her neck wears a faint tinge of the yellow which makes the male so spectacular.

The grosbeak is found in western North America, east of the Rocky Mountains. In winter they fly north to Saskatchewan, or south to the prairie states. Infrequently they fly east to New England and New York. But here they were in Virginia.

The night after the grosbeaks came, a heavy sleet covered the snow on the ground. The neighbors next door had hung several bird feeders, and stretched six feet of rope between two trees. Along the rope small cords had been attached, from the end of each swayed a small cup filled with sunflowers and other bird seed, as were the other feeders.

Having the contentious disposition of the English sparrow, ornithologists say the grosbeak is one of the

few birds which will hold his own against the sparrow. Perhaps because of this disposition, not many birds came to feed with the grosbeaks. However, the blue jay, with an aggressive reputation of his own, was frequently at the feeders. I saw no signs of discord between the two species.

During the weekend following the coming of the grosbeaks snow began to fall. The air was thick with big, soft flakes drifting lazily down. Wondering about the grosbeaks, I went to the window. Surely the box-elder never before held so much beauty as now, with the grosbeaks, a glowing cardinal, and the snow falling among its twigs and branches.

The birds were unruffled by the falling snow. Non-migratory, the cardinal was in his native habitat. The migrating grosbeaks, had they been in their native habitat, would probably have sought shelter in an evergreen tree. But, having a body temperature higher than that of any animal, both species seemed quite comfortable in the bare-branched tree.

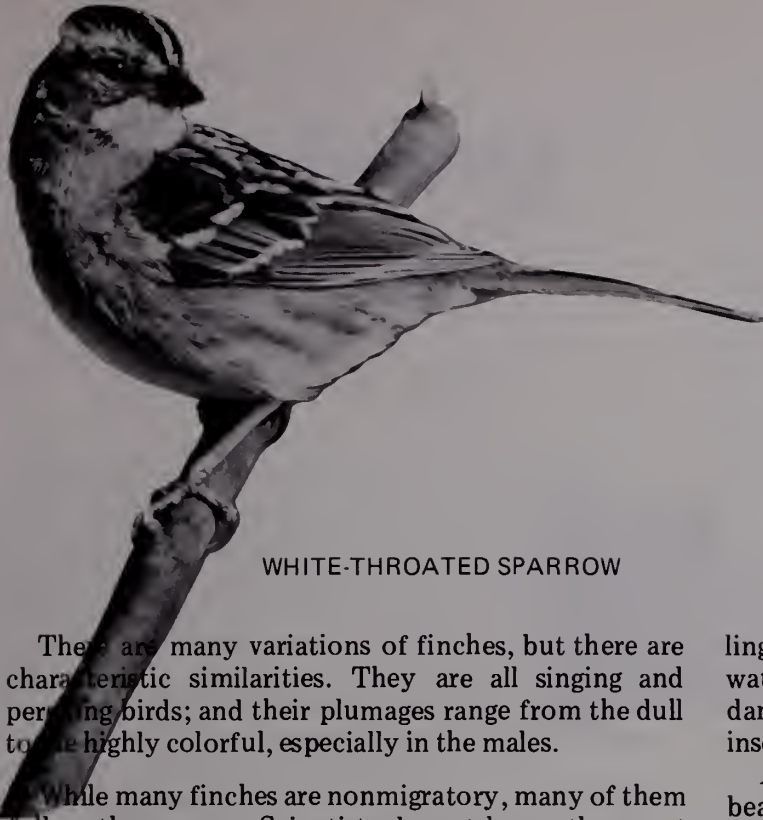
The weather gradually grew milder. On a day when the sun shone, bright with the promise of spring, a gentle breeze moved the catalpa pods and rustled in the box-elder seeds.

Perhaps the breeze whispered of boreal forest; of nests high in conifers; of babies; and of mates that sang beside them. Quickened by memory, instinct responded, "Now! Now is the time to go!" Simultaneously, the grosbeaks lifted from the cupfeeders, and those perched high flew northward from the treetop.

The backyard was quiet and colorless. No grosbeaks flashed their black and white wings beside the feeders. The little cups dangled lonesomely in the breeze. The golden migrants had gone.

The finches, of which the grosbeak is a member, is the largest family of birds, and are found in all parts of the world except Australia and Antarctica. About two hundred species are found in the United States.





WHITE-THROATED SPARROW

There are many variations of finches, but there are characteristic similarities. They are all singing and perching birds; and their plumages range from the dull to the highly colorful, especially in the males.

While many finches are nonmigratory, many of them follow the seasons. Scientists do not know the exact explanation for the seasonal migration of birds. They advance several theories. Fleeing from the glaciers which came down eons ago and covered everything with ice and snow, the birds flew southward to find food which no longer existed in their northern habitat. Stimulated by the increase of the sun's light and heat in the lengthening spring days, the bird's reproductive organs enlarge and they feel an instinctive urge to return northward to mate, to nest and rear their young. In autumn, again a scarcity of food caused by the coverage of ice and snow warns them to return south, and the age-old cycle is repeated.

Authorities say the evening grosbeaks breed in western Canada, making their flat saucer-shaped nests high in conifer trees. The three or four eggs are green, speckled with brown. The grosbeaks belong to the colorful species of the Fringillidae family. The name grosbeak refers to its short thick bill with which it cracks the hulls of many kinds of seeds.

Among the most beautiful of the grosbeaks' relatives is the well-loved cardinal. The male is about the size of the grosbeak with a less chunky body. A black mask above and a bib below his thick coral-colored beak serves to accentuate the bird's crest and plumage of red, so vivid in color that he has derived his name cardinal from the scarlet vestments of a prince of the church.

Like most species of the finch family, the female is less colorful than the male. She has an olive-gray back with dull reddish wings and crest. Her underparts are brownish pink. Unlike some female birds, she can sing.

The male's beauty does not prevent him from being a devoted mate and father. He feeds the female while she incubates the eggs, and later takes care of the first fledg-



GROSBEAK

lings while she incubates the second clutch of eggs. Bird watchers have observed him as he warns the young of danger, and leads them to search for the weed seeds and insects of which he is so fond.

Audubon declared the cardinal to be unsurpassed in beauty and loveliness of song. His joyful call, "What cheer! Cheer! Cheer!" has given him the common name of Virginia nightingale.

Artists have paid tribute to the cardinals' beauty by depicting them perched amid the showy blossoms of our state flower, the dogwood. In addition to being Virginia's state bird, six sister states, West Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Ohio, Illinois and Indiana, claim the cardinal as their own.

One morning in April, there was a stranger in my yard. It was a bird I had never seen before, and it was doing a thing not usually done by birds. It was scratching in the fallen leaves, making them fly, first with one foot then the other, much like a mother hen.

The unknown bird had a body more streamlined than either the grosbeak or the cardinal. The upper parts were black; the underparts, white. But its sides and undertail regions were a robin-red. Its wings and tail were black; the tail, much longer than the wings, bobbed from side to side.

Next morning three like birds were in the yard. Possibly they were lost birds, drifters from a flock migrating northward. Hopefully, they would remain in our vicinity. I would have been more confident if there had been a female, but their striking appearance proclaimed them males. By evening they were gone.

This bird was no stranger to others, however. Several of my acquaintances recognized its description and knew its name - towhee. It is a member of the finch family, with the scientific name of *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*, the latter name pertaining to its red eyes, which I had not been near enough to see. The female's description was similar to the appearance of the male, except his black markings on her were brown.



CARDINAL

The towhee reminds many people of the robin; hence its common name - ground robin. Essentially a bird of the ground, the towhee has sturdy legs and feet, well equipped for the industrious scratching I had seen. Its carelessly built but carefully concealed nest, on the ground, contains four pale pink eggs speckled with brown.

Ornithologists are agreed that it calls its name, "towhee;" bird watchers are equally sure its says, "chewink," which is another common name for it.

The mocker imitates with versatility, but the towhee has the qualities of a skilled ventriloquist. Naturalists are amazed at this, and speak of the bird as singing at intervals of seconds for several minutes, and from seemingly different, distant spots. When located, it was near and in plain view.

Listed among the beautiful species of finches is the smaller, plainer English or house sparrow. He has the family name Ploceidae and the scientific one of *Passer domesticus*.

Sparrows are prolific, and ornithologists compare the sparrows' habit of flocking together to roost to those of the pigeons and starlings, and have unkind things to say about the three. The sparrow has been given names with unpleasant connotations. Sometimes he is designated as a city urchin, hoodlum, or barnyard brawler.

Many think of him as a city dweller, but he is equally at home in the country. He is pugnacious and spunky, attacking much larger birds than himself. Non-migratory, he spends the winter with us. Thus, mating

early, he has the pick of the nesting sites which he defends to the death.

I remember the sparrows in the farm barn, where the horses munched their oats and corn from the feed bins. In the sheep-shed, the newborn lambs bleated and shivered beside their mother. I shivered too, for the March winds were cold and keen. Late winter gripped the land, and spring seemed far away.

But the sparrows were as bouncy as could be. Later in life, I was to learn one reason they could be so bouncy was because they had a body temperature at least ten degrees higher than the lambs and I. The sparrows were twittering and fluttering, as they busily carried straw and horsehair to a nesting site under the barn eaves. Seeing them so happily engaged, spring was no longer far away but as near as tomorrow.

Surely no adult or child has ever seen the sparrow, his feathers puffed out against the wind, and his small dark-brown body with its neat black bib conspicuous against the snow, searching for food on the street or chasing a feathered enemy around a corner, but what that person's heart has lifted and the crowded city became a warmer, friendlier place.

I venture to say that the sparrow has added more joy to the average person's life - at farm houses, in city streets and parks, where he is fed by all - than any of the more beautiful finches. Not many persons are familiar with an evening grosbeak, or a towhee. Even the cardinal is rarely seen, and then not in great numbers. But the sparrow is with us every day, aggressive, prolific, defensive, industrious and beneficial.



# Stalking Deer

By EDWIN L. PEARCE

**T**housands of hunters have used the stalking method of hunting deer for many years. Some have had as much success as the next hunter, sometimes stalking alone and sometimes with a partner or two.

At one time, I considered stalking the epitome of deer hunting. Here was a definite challenge, the matching of my wits with those of a wild animal. Of course, the deer had the home court advantage; you were always playing in his back yard. That knowledge only made me the more determined.

Because a whitetail's home grounds are limited to one or two square miles of territory during his lifetime, early in his life he learns the position of every bush, every tree, every feeding, watering, hiding and bedding-down area--everything there is to know about that territory.

A white-tail's lines of defense include the ability to smell a hunter at one-third of a mile, and to hear the slightest noise at incredible distances. Couple them with his stealth in moving noiselessly, his ability to stand for long periods without moving a muscle, to hide behind the slightest obstruction, to lie quietly in his bed while you pass close by, to crawl under a fence where you couldn't and you have what is nothing less than a ghost in his own habitat.

These are some of the advantages the deer have. The hunter's margin and the only real reasons he has any chance to bag a deer by stalking is that he can think and has a gun which is a great equalizer. But before he can effectively use it, he must get within range and be a good enough marksman to score when he does. To do this, he makes an in-depth study of the deer; his habits, where he feeds, where he beds down, where and when he waters and hides. Even with this knowledge, he must conduct himself very carefully when he's on the trail of the deer. This includes finding a hunting ground where there are few other hunters, schooling himself to make every movement slowly, avoiding silhouetting himself even against a broken background and replacing the normal human's rhythmic step when walking with stop-and-go footsteps.

The hunter's safety while stalking is suspect, since there's some danger of being mistaken for a deer by another hunter. In stalking, he's on the ground, he's partially hidden at times by low growth and trees and

he moves slowly, even as the deer. His clothing, even though orange fluorescent, doesn't preclude this misidentification. He's doubly vulnerable if he's wearing camouflage clothing.

Another danger might be snakes. My closest brush with a snake came on a stalking hunt. I was following the prescribed stalking procedure when I softly stepped over a fallen, rotted tree trunk in the mountains. My eyes were on the slight ridge ahead and I didn't see the dark-colored timber rattler. When I heard him, I also immediately felt the strike on my left leg. Fortunately, I was wearing a 14-inch boot and had my hunting trousers outside the boot. Also his blow was a glancing one and he didn't penetrate. I killed him.

Another sad experience while stalking resulted in my acquiring a bad dose of poison oak. Where I picked it up, I'll never know. Somewhere along the half-mile I stalked on a Saturday morning on the edge of swamps, I must have touched it. I had a very bad time for two weeks, and worse still, lost that time in the middle of a short deer season.

It's not easy to get a clear or a close shot at a deer while stalking. The deer's stock in trade is his skulking and inborn ability to stay hidden. He's a master at keeping cover, usually a bush or tree, between himself and you. Even when you spot him first, you may never get an unobstructed sight on him. Many times, you must take the best shot you can get, through bushes, while he's moving. More times than not, such shots are purely a gamble. Other times, you must shoot at a small target, a spot on the deer, because you rarely see the whole animal. The practice of picking an opening in the brush and firing as the deer reaches it, is certainly not conducive to accurate shooting. If he is running wildly, as is the case more often than not, your shot has just one chance in twenty of reaching its mark.

The physical requirements of stalking deer aren't too exacting as is the case when driving deer. Even the older hunters can stand the strain of stalking. However, the constant alertness required does keep you physically tense and literally on your toes during the entire stalk, if you're doing it right. You must negotiate uneven ground quietly, avoid all kinds of obstructions, and always carry your gun at the ready position. This tenseness does exact its toll physically and I've often been weary at the end of a day's stalking.

The deer spends every day of his life using and further developing his defenses against man and other predators. His senses of smell and hearing are a superior to those of man, his knowledge of his territory detailed and minute.

These are some of the good, some of the bad features of stalking deer. When you make the final evaluation, you have to base the conclusions on the results obtained. When I hunt, I like to think that I have at least a reasonable chance of success, and I don't believe I do when stalking.



# For Cardinals Only

First automatic sunflower seed feeder.

By BENJAMIN SMITH

**A** bird feeder that serves cardinals only? It is no pipe dream! There is such a feeder and here is how it evolved.

First there was a wooden dish, lathe turned, sanded and varnished with loving care. Filled with sunflower seeds, it attracted cardinals and they came to feed - early mornings, noontimes, late afternoons and evenings until after dark.

But — and this is a big but — it wasn't too long before the blue jays and fox squirrels raided the feeder. The squirrel alone, in half an hour or so, could polish off all the seeds in the dish. The blue jay would gobble fifteen or so seeds, all at one sitting. Where he put all those seeds is a mystery indeed, but we actually observed this feat. Then the bronze grackles discovered the seeds. They had trouble in cracking sunflower seeds but succeeded by tucking the seed in the corner of their beak where the leverage of their bills was greatest. Blue jays, squirrels and grackles faced down the cardinals and drove them away. We felt sad for we do so like cardinals. We are more than willing to buy sunflower seeds for them but not for their tormentors.

What to do? Remembering the inverted watering cans for poultry that were used on the farm when we were children, why not use the same principle? Let's fill a glass jar and invert it on some spacer blocks in the wood dish. But the squirrel would surely knock the jar over. So a hole was drilled in the bottom of a pint fruit jar and a threaded bolt used to hold the jar in place. A small wood and metal cone screwed to the bottom of the wood dish, formed the nut for the bolt and acted as a distributor for the seeds. This was a swell idea, except that the blue jay and grackle did their raiding unhindered. The squirrel, though, was a bit dis-

couraged. Just about when the cardinals got to patronizing the feeder really well, the English sparrows got wised up to this food supply. They came in droves and started to pitch out of the dish every seed until they found just the right sized one that they could crush in their small bills.

Then the squirrel got rambunctious, chewed the rim of the wood dish to get the seeds and finally knocked the feeder over. Studding the rim of the dish with carpet tacks helped reduce the loss of wood from the rim, but the tacks required frequent replacement as the squirrel pulled them out with his teeth. After the feeder was knocked to the ground and the glass jar broken, the repaired feeder was secured to its support by a light chain. Obviously, it wasn't the real answer to feeding just the cardinals.

So another scheme was sought. We knew that birds had different weights. However, research at the local library failed to disclose any information along this line. But maybe the difference in bird weight could be employed if a hopper type feeder was arranged with a trough and a swinging door was actuated by a perch on which the bird would sit. A bird that was too heavy would close the door over the feed trough. This should foil the squirrel, the blue jay and the grackle. So we designed and constructed the feeder. The hopper had a glass front so the birds could see the seeds — and we could see how many seeds were in the hopper, too. The

Male cardinal cracking seeds.





whole feeder was made of unchewable galvanized steel, except the glass front, the wood perch and the brass pins of the weighing mechanism. The hopper had a tight lid.

Weights of lead were made so that the perch counter-weight could be adjusted to balance loads on the perch from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 ounces. Being uncertain how rain, snow and ice of winter would affect the working of the feeder, a roof was placed over it, with a shelf below. By trial it was found that cardinals weighed just under 2 ounces, blue jays and grackles over 3 ounces and English sparrows under  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ounces. The feeder was a success to a degree. The cardinals accepted it and fed regularly. Every once in a while, in spring, a cardinal couple would sit together on the perch. Their combined weight would close the door. Almost invariably mama would tell papa to get off — and he did — so she could feed. Blue jays tried to feed but gave up; grackles likewise. Squirrels were soundly thwarted. However, the English sparrows got into the habit of pitching seeds out of the trough to find perhaps one or two they could crack. Goldfinches came and had the same frustrating “pitching” habit as the sparrows. Juncos, nuthatches and chickadees were delightful little visitors to the feeder.

After the feeder had been in service a year or so, the mechanism became sluggish. Oiling was tried with disastrous results. The oil got sticky and accumulated dust. Finally the whole mechanism had to be disassembled and washed in gasoline to get rid of the gum and dirt. The cause of the sluggishness was rust in the drilled holes in the galvanized steel parts. Happily, we found we could dislodge it by repeatedly working the mechanism manually until the joints freed up. It was as simple as that — but a nuisance.

There was no way out of the waste of seeds caused by the sparrows. They could — and did — empty the two quart hopper in a day. So the quest began for a different approach. By now we knew pretty well the approximate weights of the birds, even the titmice, goldfinches, nuthatches and chickadees, all of which weigh less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  ounce. The idea came: why not use a normally closed door over the trough, to be opened only by a bird weighing as much or more than the cardinal? Any heavier bird than a cardinal still would cause the door to close again after opening for an instant. Obviously, since the birds weighed so little, frictional forces must be kept at a minimum. Experience had shown that lubrication wasn't a good way to reduce the friction. So bushings of teflon (the same slippery stuff that makes frying pans non-sticky) were chosen for the important joints in the mechanism. The fact that the door had to open with a weight on the perch and had to close again with a greater weight — all in a single downward motion of the perch — gave us some problems, but they were solved.



The ultimate cardinal feeder

A new feeder was built, much the same shape and size as the first metal hopper feeder except that the trough door was in a normally closed position. The mechanism levers were placed alongside the hopper and trough, out of the way of the bird sitting on the perch. Originally it was under a sheltering roof but was subsequently located out in the open. There were apprehensions that cardinals sitting on the descending perch might become frightened because it went down so far, but no such problem arose.

In no time at all, the cardinals were feeding at the new feeder. They sat serenely on the descending perch and happily watched the door open to expose the seeds in the trough. The jays and grackles seemed completely frustrated — but more on that later. The English sparrows tried the perch and the door didn't open. The squirrel came and departed in disgust. So for a year, everything went well. The cardinals dined through all the seasons. One spring a different grosbeak came — a rose breasted grosbeak; first the male and later the female. The door opened for them, so they must weigh about the same as the cardinals. Goldfinches and also nuthatches, titmice and chickadees fed from the open door feeder, now relocated and set for the door to close at  $\frac{3}{4}$  ounce load on the perch.

Just about the time we were smugly congratulating ourselves that we had solved the problem of a “cardinals only” feeder, several unhappy events took place. The English sparrows found that if two of them — of the right weight — sat on the perch, their combined weight would open the door, particularly if one of the sparrows rested on one of the perch levers rather than on the wood perch. The pitching out of the seeds began again, worse luck. It wasn't as bad as previously, but the seed level in the hopper would drop alarmingly. Metal

side shields were added to the front of the feeder so that the space on the perch was restricted to just about the width of one bird and the perch levers alongside the hopper were concealed. After a few days the cardinals grudgingly accepted the limited space. The sparrows were not entirely foiled, for as one sparrow sat on the perch another would actually alight on him momentarily and the door would open. Then this sparrow would jump to the trough and prevent the door from closing.

Another disappointing circumstance was pretty well cured by the metal side shields. In shucking the sunflower seeds, the untidy cardinals weren't careful to keep the shucks away from the levers alongside the hopper and trough. These shucks would jam the levers and make the feeder inoperative — sometimes with the door wide open, a happy time for the sparrows. This jamming of the mechanism had become a fairly frequent affair, and going outside in all weathers to clear the jam had become a nuisance.

Once more the urge came to design and build another cardinal feeder, one that would eliminate the difficulties previously experienced but retain all the good features of the preceding feeders. For one thing, all the mechanism should be beneath and behind the hopper and trough so that flying shucks couldn't possibly jam the feeder. Also, the long perch should be shortened so that there would only be room for one bird. And the trough should have the same bottom slant as the slope of the hopper so that the seeds would feed better even when damp. The main bearings should be brass pins journaled in teflon bushings. Secondary joints should be lead-solder metal, drilled for brass pins thus eliminating any sticky action due to rust.

Thus was born the ultimate cardinal feeder. The short perch necessitated a narrow trough and this led to a hopper that sloped back to front and at the sides as well. When the feeder was first installed under the shelter roof, the cardinals spent quite a bit of time getting accustomed to the short perch. It seemed to baffle them and they didn't like it. However, after a while the cardinals were eating merrily again. Then came the blue jay to investigate the new feeder. All the jays but one were frustrated and departed. The one jay — ah, the clever bird — found that by bouncing up and down on the perch, in the fraction of a moment that the door opened as he jumped up, he could grab a seed. He got many that way, bouncing gaily time after time in a solemn but ludicrous manner. Part of his success was due to the inertia of the heavy copper tube used for the perch lever. When a lighter aluminum tube lever was substituted, this inertia effect was lessened. The interval of time that the door was open was too short for the jay to grab a seed so easily. A fox squirrel came repeatedly, seeing the store of seeds through the glass front. Just one time he sat up on the shelf floor, put one paw up on the perch lever — just hard enough to open

the door but not to close it — and got his mouth over the open trough. He did get a seed or two.

So it went for nearly another year. Then the sparrows began to operate the feeder in spite of making the load setting of the perch so heavy that it was marginal for the lightest cardinals to feed. For some unknown reason, our local cardinals are weighing less than they did a few years back. The lightest cardinals now weigh about 1.60 ounces; and the heaviest, about 1.85 ounces. Differentiating between cardinals and sparrows by a weighing mechanism was increasingly difficult. One cock sparrow was a particular offender. He was heavier than the others. He would find a way to open the door and one of his female consorts would sit in the open trough, blocking the door from closing. Seeds were pitched out as before, littering the shelf below.

Various schemes were tried to rectify this pillage. None seemed to work very well. However, continued observation showed that it wasn't weight alone that enabled this cock sparrow to open the door. The door swings up over the trough as it closes, until its leading edge meets the metal frame of the glass front of the hopper. This left a tiny crack between the edge of the door and the glass. By inserting his beak in this crack, the sparrow could pry the door — and by simultaneously hopping up and down on the perch, increase the downward force on the perch by the impact of his body, sufficiently to just open the door. He then would hop quickly into the trough and block the door from closing. He had it made!

The cure for these troubles was the attachment of a curved metal lip, fastened to the metal front of the hopper just enough above the door to let the door swing under it. Thus the "crack" that had been used to pry the door open no longer was there. This lip had another very beneficial effect. It made the trough opening a more narrow slot, right adjacent to the front edge of the trough. Now when the door swings shut, this part of the trough is the first to be covered. Alas for the blue jay. Now he seldom comes to the feeder and never tries the perch. The squirrels also have suffered severe damage to their egos. The slot in the open trough is too narrow for them to get their mouths on the seeds. They haven't yet learned to open the door with one paw and paddle out the seeds with the other. Think that is a far fetched idea? Not at all! Squirrels actually did this with the normally open door feeder by climbing to the top of the hopper, then leaning down over the open trough and paddling out the seeds with their paws. The squirrel would then hop down to the shelf below the feeder and munch on the fallen seeds. This happened many times until a set mouse trap put on top of the hopper cover discouraged them.

Anyhow, at long last, our "cardinals only" feeder is feeding just the cardinals. The cardinals are quite happy and so indeed are we.





By JOHN TRAISTER

**Y**ou launch at a long eddy on the South Fork of the Shenandoah River in northern Virginia. A solid gravelbar serves as a ramp as you back your pickup closer to the river and slide your 15-foot fiberglass bass boat off its trailer and into the water. It is just about dawn and you can hear the occasional jump and splash of a black bass. They will be jumping all day.

There are three of you; a dentist from Arlington, his buddy who works at the Government Printing Office in Washington, D.C., and yourself. The other two take their seats in swivel chairs behind you, because you found out long ago that by operating the boat from the bow, visibility is greatly improved which helps you avoid the many obstructions that are found in this particular river.

This time, however, you don't start the electric-starting outboard motor positioned on the stern; rather, you lower the smaller electric motor on the bow which is controlled entirely with one foot pedal, and maneuver the boat quietly along the shoreline--about 40-feet out. The three of you--all with spinning rods--begin casting what seem to be the famous "jitterbug" lures. You are using a redhead while the others are trying the frogpattern type.

Each of you must have retrieved your lures at least a dozen times before the gurgle-gurgle sound of the doctor's lure was interrupted with a tremendous splash as a 2-pound smallmouth bass nails it. He sets the hook immediately, and just as quickly, his rod bends almost double--the beginning of a 5 minute battle.

Some ten hours later, all of you return to the same gravelbar from where you started. Although you lost two of your best lures during the day, the fish chowder you prepared for lunch was fantastic and each of you are eight bass richer. Most of the bass are only about 14 inches long, but there are two that will go over 2-pounds, and one pulled the gauge on your hand-held scale to 2-lbs., 4-ounces!

So You Want to be an

# Outdoor Guide

It doesn't take long to load the boat on the trailer and when all gear is secured, drink cans are popped open before your two companions retire to their motel room; but not before each of them hands you a check for \$75! Yes, a neat \$150 for a day's fishing and you had just as much fun as your clients.

You? You're the proud owner of a \$3,500 bass fishing boat and a better-than-average knowledge of where bass live and how to make them bite. For this, hundreds of people are willing to pay you \$35 to \$75 a day for a demonstration of your knowledge and, of course, the use of your boat. With your two recent clients well satisfied with their limits of bass, you can probably count on several new clients from their recommendations alone.

Less than twenty-five years ago, only a select few were able to make a living from the outdoors, and government positions accounted for most them. The remaining handful consisted of guides, trappers, and a few outdoor writers.



DECEMBER, 1976



Now, with millions of Americans flocking to the outdoors each year, new opportunities in guiding careers have followed. The first thought that pops into mind when a person hears the title "Outdoor Guide" probably is that of a White Hunter in Africa leading a safari in search of dangerous wild game or a lost diamond mine. But this is not always the case.

Take, for example, Joseph Sottosantti of Luray, who organized Shenandoah River Outfitters, Inc., back in the spring of 1970. With some acreage on the river, ten canoes, and some miscellaneous gear, Joe started guiding campers on 30 or 40 mile excursions down the Shenandoah River--where his clients saw the signs of early settlers and not those of modern man.

Several activities were offered; that is, exploring caves along the river banks, visiting the ruins of ancient indian village sites, observing wildlife, participating in a 13-mile canoe race, or a week survival trip living off wild foods. In other words, Joe provided the idea and some equipment and Nature did the rest.

Camps were set up along the river bank where instructions were given on fishing, swimming, wild plant identification, or just about any other related outdoor activity.

Now the business has grown, in only five years, to where Joe has 150 canoes, 13 employees (including 3 guides) and caters to over 600 people per week during the warmer months.

"It's a life that's certainly not for those who don't like hard work," Joe says. "You're up half the night getting food and equipment ready for the next day's trip; with only three or four hours of sleep you're up again getting the parties started on their way. Then all day you and your crew are transporting canoes and people from various pick-up points back to their cars.

When the last canoe is back by 7 p.m., it's time to clean all of the equipment, and start over for the following day's group. You're never idle a minute."

If you think a venture of this nature is your bag, you'll need access to some river, lake, or stream; a good knowledge of the area; and at least \$7,500 to purchase equipment. This is only on a very small scale. But your customers are paying from \$16 to \$30 apiece each day, and if you do your part, profits can be made.

Another neighbor of mine, who also lived along this same river, made a decent living all of his life by guiding both hunters and fishermen.

Around the first of March of each year, Clarence was busy catching minnows, nightcrawlers, and other baits for use by his clients that would be arriving now until the first of November. Unlike Joe Sottosantti with his 150 canoes or our fictitious character with his \$3500 bass boat, Clarence had only one or two wooden Jonboats--built by himself and usually only covered a 3-mile stretch of the river. But for seven months out of the year, Clarence had all the boarding fishermen that he and his wife could handle.

Two or three people a week would make reservations to room and board at Clarence's home where they were fed fresh garden vegetables, homemade butter, homemade bread, and livestock raised on the small homestead. Clarence would then take the fishermen on a float trip down the river during the day; finding all of the best fishing holes, and knowing what the fish liked the best this time of year always provided his clients with good catches. Therefore, most of them returned the following year.

If some of his guests wanted to take a break from fishing and explore, say, an old Civil War Battlefield, Clarence could show them exactly where the trenches were during the Battle of Milford; his house was built on one of them! Or he could point them in the right direction to gather some wild strawberries, blackberries, and the like. He knew what parts of the river were safe for swimming, what land his clients could trespass on and what land they could not.

During the fall and winter, he also catered to hunters--providing room and board as well as guiding them to the better game areas. All was done on a very small scale compared to some of the modern facilities, but still he was able to make a very good living.

Up to this point, it may seem that making a living as an outdoor guide is simple, every day is a holiday and every meal a feast. But, I'm sorry to say that this is not always the case. Just like any other occupation, outdoor guides have their share of drawbacks also.

What happens when unseasonal rains occur one year? Obviously, the customers aren't going to do business with you if the fishing is bad and this means that no money is going to come in. Many fishing guides will then go in debt; many will have to close shop; and those who are able to get bank loans to carry them over







**BIG GAME TROPHY CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED.** (Left to Right). Bud Orndorff of Strasburg (Class I-9 points or more) with his 12-point trophy buck. The buck was taken in Shenandoah County during the 1975-1976 season and scored 216 3/8. Class II (7 & 8 points) winner was Richmonder Arthur M. Atkinson. Atkinson's buck was taken in Louisa County and scored 187 7/8. Class III (6 points or less) was won by another Richmond resident, Benny Wingfield. His 6-point buck scored 148 7/16 and was taken in Lancaster County. Winner of the Class IV (Archery) section was Jerry Armes of Madison Heights, with the 10-point buck killed in Amherst County. The head scored 191 5/16. The 29th Annual State Big Game Trophy Contest was held in Harrisonburg on October 22-23, 1976.

Commission Photos by F. N. Satterlee

# 1976 Big Game Trophy Winners

DEER	CLASS I (9 POINTS OR MORE)	COUNTY	POINTS	SCORE
1.	Bud Orndorff, Strasburg	Shenandoah	12	216 3/8
2.	Roderick Bullock, Petersburg	Sussex	11	214 6/8
3.	Herman Johnson, Lynchburg	Amherst	13	202
4.	Gary McAllister, Wytheville	Wythe	10	196 15/16
5.	Wayne Baker, Rapidan	Orange	10	193 7/8

## CLASS II (7 & 8 POINTS)

1.	Arthur M. Atkinson, Richmond	Louisa	8	187 7/8
2.	George Floyd, Emporia	Greensville	8	182 1/8
3.	Lindwood Nichols, Evington	Bedford	8	181 2/8
4.	Bill Lang, Charlottesville	Albemarle	8	177 5/16
5.	James Long, Luray	Page	8	168 6/8

## CLASS III (6 POINTS OR LESS)

1.	Benny Wingfield, Richmond	Lancaster	6	148 7/16
2.	Clarence Burton, Hampton	James City	6	117 7/8
3.	Dwight C. Neff, Broadway	Rockingham	6	101 1/8
4.	Donald Kidd, Charlottesville	Rockingham	4	79 2/8
5.	Mike Barb, Edinburg	Shenandoah	6	63 5/16

## CLASS IV (ARCHERY)

1.	Jerry Armes, Madison Heights	Amherst	10	191 5/16
2.	James F. Jenkins, Luray	Page	12	160 6/8
3.	Charles Garrison, Earlysville	Albemarle	8	155 1/8
4.	Coleman Rittenhouse, Grottoes	Augusta	10	151 6/8
5.	John Marshall, Elkton	Rockingham	8	146 4/8

BEAR	COUNTY	SCORE
1.	Joe Taliaferro, Churchville	Augusta 27 6/8
2.	Richard Collins, Harrisonburg	Rockingham 24 3/8
3.	Don McCulloch, Lynchburg	Amherst 23

Max Carpenter, left, Game Commission Biologist and Director of the annual State Big Game Trophy Contest, chats with the 1976 State Winner, Bud Orndorff of Strasburg, Va.



# RECIPE FOR A

By MARTHA W. STEGER

**W**e realized that we had found the right landlord when we arrived at our new apartment on a wintry day and saw a field-dressed deer being hung from the upstairs railing of the garage, the upstairs that was to be our apartment. The landlord, we soon learned, had also recently returned from a goose-hunting trip into Canada and was quick to offer to accompany my husband in as many short hunting expeditions in the surrounding Charlottesville area as he could find the time to make.

We discovered immediately that we shared, with this landlord and his wife, the enjoyment of the archetypal aura that hunting seems to exude: the excitement of a very early, hot breakfast on a frosty morning, accompanied by conversation speculating on how the hunters will fare that day; the departure, with the dogs' high-strung enthusiasm; and finally, the return, with or without game, but always with the stories and conversation

that is somewhat wasted on those who have not participated.

It was in one of these post-hunt sessions that one of us hit upon the idea of a "cooperative game dinner." Each couple would invite two other couples as guests to the dinner and both couples would share in the cost, preparation, and cleanup of the meal. "Cooperative" was not entirely an appropriate word to describe the game however, since our landlord was providing the goose and venison, and Tom could only contribute the small game — squirrel and dove. "Cooperative" also could not describe the setting of the dinner, since it was their large, Sheraton-furnished dining room and their crystal, china, silver, and linen table appointments that we would be using. We wives, though, especially liked the final connotation of the word "cooperative:" the men insisted that they cook the game entrees, decide on the accompanying wine, and make the Caesar salad.



## CURRIED SQUIRREL (4 squirrels)

½ cup butter or margarine, melted  
½ cup all-purpose or unbleached flour  
¼ cup onions  
¼ cup chopped tart apple  
2 cups cream  
1 tsp. grated lemon peel, curry powder, cayenne pepper, nutmeg.

Cut squirrel into serving pieces, brush with ¼ cup melted butter, dredge in ¼ cup seasoned flour (using 1 tsp. salt, 1/8 tsp. pepper to the ¼ cup flour). Place on a rack, in pre-heated 450° oven, and reduce heat immediately to 350°. Turn squirrel over when cooking is about half through. Cool, de-bone, and add to curry sauce.

Use remaining ¼ cup butter to saute onion and apple until tender. Add ¼ cup flour to make a roux; add chicken broth and cream slowly, stirring constantly and simmering over low heat until well blended. Add lemon peel and de-boned squirrel; immediately before serving, add 1-4 tps. curry powder, and dashes of cayenne pepper and nutmeg. Place small condiment bowls of appropriate curry accompaniments on table: peanuts, raisins, chutney.

## BARBECUED DOVE

4 wild doves, cleaned, salt and pepper  
1 stick butter or margarine  
½ cup boiling water  
½ cup dry sherry

Split doves into halves. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and place on grate 3 or 4 inches above hot coals. Melt butter in heavy saucepan; add water and sherry. Baste doves frequently with mixture. Cook 10 minutes on each side, being careful not to over-cook.

## CANADIAN GOOSE GRAND MARNIER

Place in cavity of cleaned goose: 1 large, quartered onion, 1 large, unpeeled, quartered apple.

Other ingredients needed: ¼ cup melted butter  
4-6 slices bacon

1 cup Sauterne wine, salt and pepper

Baste goose with melted butter, and season to taste with salt and pepper when you place it in a roasting pan. Put several slices of bacon across the breast, place on a rack, uncovered, in a pre-heated 450° oven; reduce heat at once to 350°. Cook one hour; drain fat from pan and add 1 cup Sauterne wine. Baste goose frequently, cooking another hour. Cool to the touch, de-bone, and add meat to the Grand Marnier Sauce to serve with rice.



# GAME DINNER

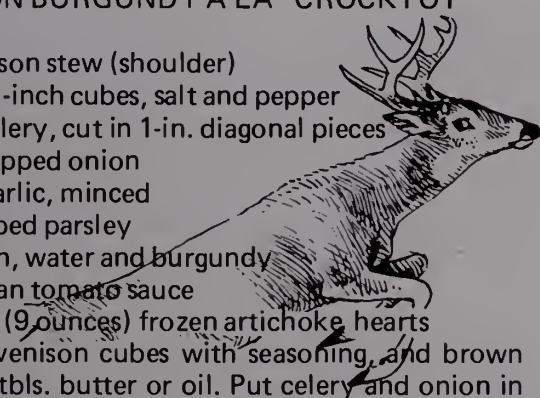
That left the table arrangement, hors d'oeuvres, vegetable, bread, and dessert for us wives to concentrate on.

The fine venison roast was marinated in burgundy for two days prior to the dinner, and our landlord roasted the Canadian goose the morning of the dinner so that it would have ample time to cool, be de-boned, and prepared in the Grand Marnier sauce. He decided that a full-bodied red wine, Barolo, would best complement the meal, since this, like the Italian Chiantis, is dry and goes well with strong-flavored, rich entrees. In the late afternoon of that day he and Tom worked on the curry sauce for the squirrel so that it would only require re-heating a couple hours later. The only last-minute preparation would be the barbecuing of the doves on a grate in the kitchen fireplace. Tom and I felt the effort more than worthwhile, as the flavor always seems so much better than that achieved through the baking or frying of the birds. Also, the use of the fireplace became a good conversation-piece for the assembled guests just before they went into the dining room, and it was on the large oak table in front of this

hearth that we placed the hors d'oeuvres: a basket of crackers and a chafing dish of warm broccoli dip.

For a centerpiece on the diningroom table we wives had decided on the hospitable, eighteenth-century style arrangement of fruit — pineapple, oranges, apples, and grapes. As a side dish to be passed with the game entrees, we had prepared a mixture of white, brown, and wild rice, since it nicely complemented the flavors of all the game and also provided a good base for both the curry and the Grand Marnier sauces. The menu was completed with the choices of Sally Lunn bread and fresh-frozen string beans from the summer's garden. For dessert, slices of pumpkin chiffon pie were served as a light finishing touch to a rich, heavy meal.

## VENISON BURGUNDY A LA "CROCK POT"

- 
- 2 lbs. venison stew (shoulder)  
(cut in 1-inch cubes, salt and pepper)
  - 3 stalks celery, cut in 1-in. diagonal pieces
  - ½ cup chopped onion
  - 2 cloves garlic, minced
  - 1 T. chopped parsley
  - ½ cup each, water and burgundy
  - 8 ounce-can tomato sauce
  - 1 package (9 ounces) frozen artichoke hearts

Sprinkle venison cubes with seasoning, and brown lightly in 2 tbs. butter or oil. Put celery and onion in crock pot. Add browned meat cubes and remaining ingredients. Cover, and cook on Low 7-12 hours or on High for 4-6 hours, stirring occasionally. Serve over rice or noodles.

As a time-saving measure, cut the meat into cubes the night before cooking. It is also preferable to marinate these cubes overnight in some of the burgundy. The next morning, drain, brown, and combine cubes with other ingredients. (You can be ready for guest that evening even if you spend the entire afternoon on the tennis court or at a shopping center.)

## GRAND MARNIER SAUCE

- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon wine vinegar
- 2 oranges
- 2/3 cup Grand Marnier liqueur

Combine sugar and vinegar in heavy saucepan, and cook over medium heat just long enough to dissolve sugar. Add juice of 2 oranges, 2/3 cup Grand Marnier and the grated peel of 1 orange. Combine this with juices in roasting pan, after skimming off any excess fat, and correct the seasoning. A nice decorative touch can be added with julienne strips of orange peel from second orange; these should be simmered in boiling water 5 minutes, drained, and added to the sauce.

## MARINATED VENISON

Leave the venison in this marinade from 1-3 days; turn it from time to time. (For 4 lbs. loin or rib roast).

- 2 cups dry red wine
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 cup water
- 10 whole cloves
- 8 black peppercorns
- 1 large sliced onion

Allow roast to reach room temperature (70°), and place it on a rack, uncovered, in a preheated 400° oven. Reduce the oven temperature immediately to 325°, and cook 30 minutes per pound (check during last quarter of the cooking time for doneness desired.)

(Note: If less-tender cut of venison is used, cook it covered, with the marinade in the roasting pan; turn at least once during the cooking time.)

# FLY TIEERS



By NEAL DANIEL

## CATCH FISH

**I**t seems that you can hardly pick up a book on fly fishing without a section set aside by the author to tell you that you really should tie your own flies. The author will tell you that tying is easy to learn and that there is no satisfaction like catching a fish on a fly you have tied yourself. Some authors will tell you that tying flies will save you money. There is a degree of truth to all of those claims. What the authors forgot to tell you is how many people start out to tie flies and then quit within a very short time. So let's take a look at why a hobby that is economical, easy and satisfying isn't practiced by the majority of people who try it.

The first thing to look at is the price of fly tying. You can't get a decent fly for less than forty-five cents and most are more. It would seem to follow that a person could buy an eight-dollar fly tying kit, tie twenty flies and be ahead. That kind of thinking is responsible for the largest number of drop out would-be tiers. Anyone who can tie any fly with an eight dollar kit has incredible natural ability. The cheapie kits simply do not contain the tools and materials to allow the beginner to tie a decent fly. Fly tying can be economical in the long run. The initial cost, however, should be relatively high. Quality tools and materials are expensive when compared to the price of a fly. If great care is taken a person can start with an investment of thirty dollars. Fifty dollars is more reasonable. One company sells a fly tying kit for ninety dollars and there is neither waste nor frills in it.

The second thing to look at is the ease of tying flies. One author stated something to the effect that anyone who could tie their shoe could tie flies. That is probably true. Think back and remember how easy it was to tie your shoe when you were four or five years old. If you have a young child who is just learning how to tie a shoe watch the child's frustration when the laces don't work as they should. That is exactly how I felt when I first started tying flies. Your first flies will not be masterpieces. They probably won't be very durable. If you have tied a good pattern as well as you could they probably will catch fish. One of my teachers told me that you tie three hundred flies and then you start to learn how to tie.

The final question is that of the "special satisfaction" of catching a fish with a fly you tie yourself. As much as I love to tie, I feel it only fair to balance those who would have you feel that catching a fish on your own hand-made wonder is a sensation closely akin to a first kiss. There is another group who would have you believing that you are not really a fly fisherman unless you tie your own flies. Nonsense. You can live without tying and you can be a very good fly fisherman without tying. In fact many flies have been invented by non-tiers who told a tier what they wanted. Fly tying is a fine hobby, but if you don't want to make a reasonable investment of time and money or if you are not really interested--buy your flies. Professional tiers have to make a living too.





A well-tied fly snagged this good-sized brook trout.

If you still want to tie flies I have a few suggestions that might help you on your way. The most important thing is to get a good teacher. Many community colleges offer fly tying in their adult education classes. If you have a friend who is a good tier he or she might guide you. The other way to learn is to get a good

beginner's book. I particularly recommend Paul Jorgenson's *Tying Flies For Fresh & Salt Water*. *How To Tie Fresh Water Flies* by Kenneth E. Bay is good, as is Jack Dennis' *Western Fly Tying Manual*. Be careful, there are a great many books written on fly tying and only a few are beginners books. As good as those books are, none can compare with the instruction of a qualified tier.

A few last words on the question of economy. Many of us economized when we first started tying. We have a drawer full of cheap tools somewhere to prove it. Instead of buying one good vise in the first place we now own one cheap vise and one good one. Good tools are lifetime tools. Good tools are expensive, but don't go by price alone. Many bad tools are expensive also. Follow the advice of your instructor or your text book. When you are struck by the price of materials you may want to economize there. Cheap materials offer no economy. The way to economize on materials is to decide on a few patterns while you develop your skills. It is much better to have a few items of fine quality than a collection of trash. Again follow the advice of your instructor. If you don't have an instructor the book *Fly Tying Materials* by Eric Leiser should be helpful.

One final bit of advice. If possible find a local merchant you can trust and who knows something about fly tying. Let him know what you want out of tying and he should be able to help. That sounds like an ad and it is. It is an ad for my store and any other tackle store that makes an effort to give service as well as sell products. We'd like to help you. Good tying.



Looking like a miniature bundle of straw, this partially tied fly will soon be a prime trout attractor.

# Ice Fishing in Virginia?

By GERALD ALMY

**F**lag up!" came Jim Bristor's frantic cry as I gazed absentmindedly at a hawk soaring above the tree-studded cove of A.P. Hill's Buzzard's Roost Pond. Spinning around on the slick ice, I nearly sprawled on my face before setting off at a gallop for the bobbing orange flag some twenty yards away. Approaching the tip-up, I slowed and slid on rubber felt-lined boots to the edge of the hole. I peered down intently.

The metal spool was stationary. "I don't think he's on," I said dejectedly, cautiously reaching down and lifting the cedar tip-up frame to grasp the blue monofilament. "Wo! Got him!" I shouted as the free spool let out a crackling screech and line fled beneath the ice. Grabbing the slippery line I pulled back and felt the hearty bucking of an angry pickerel thrashing in resistance.

There's usually little finesse involved in ice fishing, and I didn't break this tradition as I backed up clumsily and hand lined the feisty pickerel towards the hole, derricking him on the glistening ice.

My grin was a mile wide. Jim Bristor and Steve Carlyle, my angling companions, were equally ebullient. At last we were vindicated. Erased were the frowns, the disbelieving stares, the sarcastic smiles and behind-the-back chuckles we elicited from bypassers and people whom we told we were going ice fishing in Virginia. When fishing Massaponax Creek off Route 17 the day before, Jim and I nearly caused a traffic jam. Virtually every other car slowed down to study us on the ice. One driver idled dangerously in the middle of the road for a full five minutes, staring in disbelief.

The 15-inch pickerel flopping on the ice removed any doubts we had as to our sanity. Both Jim and I had done considerable ice fishing in Pennsylvania, New York, and other northern states. But this was our first contact with an Old Dominion fish through the ice, and it seemed a suitable cause for merriment.

The congratulations were shortlived, however, for after unhooking the first fish, I glanced at my jig pole and saw that it was about to vanish into the lake from the pull of another fish. By some stroke of luck, the pole wedged against the hole with the tip half-submerged and the handle tilted dangerously upward. This time I really sped across the ice, grabbing the rod just as it started to slip through the hole. Miraculously, the



Jim Bristor unhooks Buzzard's Roost Pond chain pickerel.

fish was still on, and I pulled our second pickerel in two minutes through the hole. This fish was a handsome specimen of about two-pounds.

Ice fishing isn't a common pastime for Virginia residents, but when the occasion does arise, a new and exciting outdoor sport awaits the uninitiated. Like most wintertime anglers, I used to curse the bitter cold days that came in December and January. They often created a skim ice that made boat fishing a chore. Now, if it comes in one water-freezing spell, I find myself encouraging Old Man Cold. If temperatures are going to get cold enough to prevent open water fishing, let them go ahead and freeze up the lakes for a bit of "walk on the water" angling.

The sport can be extremely enjoyable, as millions of northern anglers have long since discovered. It can also be very rewarding in terms of fish caught, once you gain a little experience in the tactics required for this different approach to fishing. Add to this the fact that ice fishing requires very little in the way of special equipment and that it opens up a great deal of new water to formerly shore-bound anglers, and you begin to see the potential of this winter sport.

Fish and game commission surveys in several northern states have shown that ice fishermen in those areas are more successful per hour of angling effort





Author unhooks A. P. Hill pickerel. Insulated rubber boots are the best foot gear.

than summer fishermen! This probably comes as a surprise to many tradition-steeped southern anglers who think fish virtually stop feeding when the lakes and rivers get cold enough to freeze up and walk upon. Certainly the people who saw us out on the lakes thought we were a strange bunch.

It's impossible to say precisely how much cold weather it takes to produce ice thick enough to fish on, because this varies greatly from area to area, depending upon wind, elevation, local temperatures, shoreline tree growth, and other factors. On January 23 this year, Jim, Steve, and I fished two ponds on A.P. Hill -- Buzzard's Roost and Bowie's. Buzzard's Roost had about three inches of ice, while Bowie's, some three miles away, had close to six inches.

Three inches is what I consider a bare minimum for safe ice fishing. Even here, caution should be exercised, for there may be weak spots where the ice is not this thick. If you are fishing in deep water, where there is more danger than just getting wet, four inches should be considered the minimum safe ice thickness. Rivers demand extra caution, for they often contain "flaws" or weak spots from the current that are not visible on top of the ice.

Many species of fish found in Virginia can be taken through the ice. Walleye, muskellunge and northern

pike, where these are present, often bite eagerly during the coldest winter weather. While bass are not extremely active throughout the cold months, some husky specimens are occasionally dredged up through the frozen depths. Trout are prime targets for ice fishermen, especially in some of the smaller stocked ponds in the western mountainous counties of the state. Bluegills can be taken in quantity if you are familiar with their deep-water hangouts, while yellow perch are among the most eager winter feeders.

Perhaps the two most likely ice fishing adversaries for Old Dominion anglers are pickerel and crappie. Both are widely distributed throughout the state and respond well to baits and artificials worked through the ice. Often the pair are found in the same ponds and lakes, and sometimes they can be taken through the same hole.

There are significant differences between the ice fishing tactics for these two fish, however. Crappie are a schooling fish, whereas pickerel are not. Thus, if you catch one crappie, chances are good for finding more if you have holes chopped nearby. Some ice fishermen prefer to cut holes in groups about ten feet apart when searching for schooling fish, in hopes that several baits concentrated in one area will hold a passing school for longer periods. Crappie are also generally found in deeper water than pickerel during the winter, congregating in depths of 4-12 feet more often than not.

Pickerel fishermen usually prefer to spread their rigs out more, covering likely looking spots in water depths of 3-8 feet. If you are familiar with the body of water you choose to ice fish, from warm weather fishing trips, any known pickerel or crappie hangout deserves a rig. Some seasoned ice fishermen find it productive to set a string of rigs across a shallow cove to intercept any pickerel that may be swimming through the area.

There are many productive baits and artificials for ice fishing. Trout anglers do well on such odd items as cheese, corn, and marshmallows, as well as the more common nightcrawlers and salmon eggs. For most warm water gamefish, the overwhelming first choice in live bait is the minnow, which is the major food for such fish. Surprisingly enough, pickerel seem especially fond of small minnows in the 1-2 inch range when ice covers the water.

Artificials shouldn't be overlooked entirely, however. There are dozens of lures made specifically for ice fishing, but some of the standards from your warm water repertoire can prove deadly. Shad darts, marabou jigs, and spinners are all good choices. Combinations of jigs or darts and a live minnow frequently add that special dash required to fool a reluctant winter customer. These lures should be worked just off the bottom with a light jigging motion followed by a pause of a minute or so. Hits often come when the lure lies motionless.

(continued on page 21)

"In Natures Garden"

# The Persimmon

By ELIZABETH MURRAY

I always receive a certain number of letters about the column which I write for Virginia Wildlife, occasional compliments, occasional criticisms, some requests for information and a great many letters which supply me with information I did not already have, or tell me stories I did not already know. But by far the largest amount of all this correspondence has been about persimmons which I mentioned in a general article on wild cooking a few years ago. I am constantly being asked for my recipe for persimmon bread, and so it seems worthwhile at this time of year to devote some more attention to these much-maligned fruits and what you can do with them.

Our persimmon, *Diospyros virginiana*, is the only member of the ebony family (Ebenaceae) in our eastern U. S. flora. It is a tree with very hard, blackish wood, somewhat like ebony, and alternate, shiny green, simple leaves. Persimmon trees are largely dioecious, that is male (staminate) and female (pistillate) flowers are on different trees, or at least if the pistillate flowers do have stamens, they are non-functional. Pistillate flowers have a greenish-cream, urn-shaped corolla about half an inch long. There are 4 styles and, when present, 8 sterile stamens. The flowers are usually solitary with short stalks. Male flowers are generally grouped in twos or threes, they also have urn-like corollas, but they are smaller than the female flowers, and have 16 fertile stamens. The fruit, occurring, of course, only on the female trees, is known technically as a "several-locular berry." Persimmon trees may get to be quite big. The one which holds the state record is 79 feet high with a circumference near the base of 7½ feet. Typically, however, they are much smaller. I pick most of my persimmons off a tree that is barely 20 feet high, and it was smaller than this when it first started bearing fruit.

Persimmon trees like dry woods, abandoned fields and clearings. One often sees a little grove of them standing alone in the middle of an old pasture. The trees flower in early summer and the fruit is set--but by no means ready--by late summer.

Not every female persimmon tree has good fruit, and trees seem to be set in their 'fruit-producing ways' from 'birth'. We have two trees which always produce dried-up useless persimmons, whereas the small tree I mentioned above consistently has good, juicy fruit regardless of the weather. So, if you are in the persimmon business, it is a wise plan to remember the good trees and return to them year after year.

Persimmons should be picked sometime in the early winter. Country lore says "after the first frost." Actually, if you wait for this in Virginia, the persimmons may have already fallen off and spoiled on the ground. And, contrary to popular belief, the first frost does not necessarily take the "pucker" out of the fruit. I pick persimmons when they feel very soft and squashy, when their pretty orange ripe-looking color has dimmed to a dull, dirty overripe-looking purple--and just before they drop off the tree. In other words, if fruit has started to drop off my tree, then I'll go out at once and pick the persimmons which remain!

The persimmons should be washed and put through a food mill to get the pulp out and leave the seeds. It does not matter if the "pucker" is still in the pulp. Once the pulp is baked into the bread, the "pucker" disappears. This is the greatest discovery I have made since emigrating to this country and I made it all by myself--nobody told me! The pulp can be frozen until you are ready to use it. Extra loaves of bread can be frozen after baking until required. I always try to keep a few loaves in the freezer for unexpected guests. The bread is universally popular. I take it to school picnics, sell it at school carnivals, serve it to foreign visitors to show off our local produce, give it to neighbors for Christmas and bake it in quantity for family and friends at my own home.

Now for the recipe. It is very easy. A cup of sugar is creamed together with six ounces of margarine, two eggs are beaten in, and then two cups of flour and one teaspoonful of baking soda added. Finally at least one cup of persimmon pulp is stirred in (more is acceptable) and nuts and/or raisins added if you like--we prefer it without. The mixture is spread into two one-pound loaf pans lined with wax paper and baked for one hour at 325°. The pulp darkens on heating so the result is deep brown loaves from which the wax paper can be peeled while they are still quite warm. When cold, thin slices can be cut from the loaves and spread with butter. The recipe can be doubled quite satisfactorily.

This bread is the only 'persimmon food' which I make routinely in my own household, and I can offer this recipe as being thoroughly well-tried and much appreciated. But there are other ways in which persimmons can be used in cooking. I have been in intermittent correspondence for some years with Mr. Arthur Stewart in California, who is an exile from *Diospyros virginiana*, which is not allowed to be "imported" into California. They have great big pulpy





*Illustration by Lucile Walton*

persimmons in California which occasionally find their way to our grocery stores, and which, in my chauvinism, I find a poor second to our local ones. Mr. Stewart has showered me with recipes for persimmon pudding (a dish more traditionally cooked in the Carolinas than in Virginia), telling me that I could surely work out my own formula from amongst them. I did, and offer it here in its simplest form. Two ounces of margarine were creamed together with a cup of sugar and then two egg yolks, a half a cup of milk and a cup of persimmon pulp beaten in. To this, a cup of plain flour, sifted with half a teaspoon of baking soda, was added. Finally the two egg whites, stiffly beaten, were folded gently in. The batter was poured into a well-greased casserole, baked in a water bath for one hour at 325°, and served hot, with cream. There are many embellishments and variations for the pudding, all of which sound palatable. Nuts, raisins or dates can be added. Some recipes suggest combining sweet potato and persimmon pulp, and some advocate the use of sour milk. The pudding can be steamed instead of baked. I think Mr. Stewart's advice to me applies to everyone. Anybody seriously interested in persimmon pudding can work out their own optimal recipe from these suggestions.

*Dios* means 'divine', sometimes used for Jupiter himself, and *puros* or *pyros* means 'wheat' or 'grain'. So, translated somewhat loosely, the generic name for the persimmon could mean "food of the gods" which some of the most ardent admirers of the fruit believe it to be.

#### ICE FISHING IN VIRGINIA? (Continued from Page 19)

Tip ups allow pickerel fishermen to cover a large amount of territory and still keep track of their rigs. A tip up generally consists of a crude reel attached to a wooden frame which holds a baited line in the water and signals when a fish strikes by a flag which flies up when the bait is taken. These may be purchased from mail order dealers such as Herter's.

One needn't purchase tip ups or special jigging rods to give ice fishing a try, however. The only tool you absolutely need is something with which to chop a hole in the ice. Spuds and augers are commonly used for this where ice fishing is popular. But an axe, crow bar, or long heavy iron rod will work if the ice isn't too thick. In a pinch, you might even use an ice pick!

For the actual fishing, you can easily use your regular spinning or bait-casting outfits. If minnow fishing, it's also possible to simply find a two or three foot long stick, tie six or eight feet of 8-12 pound test line to it, attach a hook, split shot, and bobber, and position the branch across the hole so it won't slip into the water. When a fish bites, simply handline him in. It's not the most graceful angling, but it gets the job done.

An ice skimmer is useful for removing chips of ice from the hole after it's cut. But a small minnow net works fine for this, as does a food strainer.

It's wise to dress warm for ice fishing, and insulated rubber boots are necessary to keep feet warm and dry. Hot beverages and a hearty lunch are welcome on any ice fishing foray, and many like to build a small fire or bring a butane stove to cook up a steaming meal on the lake shore.

A few other items you may want to take on an ice fishing expedition are a lawn chair, for a bit of relaxation between bites, and a two or three ounce sinker tied to a piece of heavy line for checking water depths. It's usually best to fish just a foot or two off the bottom.

Except for those rare occasions when action comes steadily throughout the day you'll find that bites come in spurts when ice fishing. Three or four tip ups may fly and jigging poles bounce in a few minutes. Then there may be a blank for an hour or so.

But there's plenty to keep you occupied during those lulls: checking baits to keep lively minnows on the line, jigging at another hole, or simply chewing the fat with companions.

By its very nature ice fishing is a social sport compared to warm weather angling. The mobility provided by the ice exerts an equalizing factor that draws winter sportsmen together in friendly comradery.

It's different, that much is for sure. If you'd like to try a new sport this winter, why not venture out onto the frozen ponds whenever the winter proves mean enough?

# A Case For Hunters

By BILL WEEKES

**G**uns of Autumn" and anti-gun elements notwithstanding, hunters, probably more than any one segment of our society, help save our wildlife. Hunters are bellwethers in the preservation of our outdoor heritage in two ways: through involvement and with money.

When they hunt by the rules, hunters preserve the integrity of game management. Hunting is a tool of game management. In this way, hunting is not only an end in itself, it is a means. It is the means by which biologists discern the condition of the overall herd. Whether or not he is aware of it, the hunter is the game manager's helpmate. When he harvests a deer and brings it to a check station, the hunter gives the biologist one more individual in a sample.

A sample is a portion of that which is larger. The 20,000 deer harvested annually in a given state is a sample of the larger estimated 250,000-plus deer existing in this state. It is a valid assumption that a sample, if it is large enough, is a reflection of the whole. Therefore, the physical condition of 20,000 animals should reflect the physical condition of 250,000 animals of the same species in the same general habitat.

But the physical condition of the deer--the existence or absence of internal parasites, the amount of fat in the bone marrow, or the general appearance, as examples--may also be a reflection of the overall condition of the habitat in which the deer exist.

If the deer in a sample look lean, or emaciated, having little fat in the bone marrow and carrying internal parasites, the biologist has received the signals which tell him the deer population is much too large. He knows the existing habitat is inadequate to support (feed) the existing number of whitetails. He also knows, without really having to go afield, that the habitat is being overbrowsed and overgrazed. In short, the biologist knows the habitat is being destroyed, plant regeneration is being impeded. When this happens for the whitetail the biologist also knows non-game wildlife is also suffering because the deer are robbing plant energy usually available for other creatures.

Under ordinary conditions, the game manager can head off deer overpopulation with simple recommendations. He can recommend the extension of the hunting season, and/or increase the number of doe hunting days. Were hunting eliminated, the problem would be aggravated.

Anti-hunting purists cringe at the thought of hunters killing female deer. But it is the doe, not the buck, that is the main cause for the increase of a deer population. One buck will service several females, and, therefore, a large portion of the buck population is unnecessary to maintain a stable population level. A population comprising 10 to 20 percent bucks can safely maintain itself. This means 80 to 90 percent of the male deer population can be harvested annually without damaging the chances of a deer population in replenishing itself.

Consequently, the hunter who bags his trophy helps keep the deer population at a safe level. The hunter who checks in his deer also helps the biologist analyze the deer population.

No other segment of our society has contributed so much money for so long a time in supporting programs of wildlife and habitat preservation. Most hunters are glad to contribute financially. Historically, in this century, they have insisted on doing so.

Through license fees and excise taxes on guns and ammunition, 20 million American hunters are contributing about \$150 million annually to wildlife management and preservation programs throughout the 50 states. During the past 50 years, these contributions have amounted to \$2.5 billion.

Where there were only 500,000 deer in America in 1900, there are now an estimated 16 million. Where there were only 100,000 wild turkeys in our country as recently as 1952, there are now as estimated one million.

Most, if not all the credit for this goes to hunting organizations who have adopted self-imposed taxes and license fees. Money from hunters have paid salaries for biologists who research new ways of managing and preserving game and non-game wildlife; have paid salaries for game wardens to enforce hunting rules and, hopefully, to bring to task those who would give the hunter a bad name; and have paid for the purchase of land away from development and for the implementation of habitat manipulation practices designed to enhance wildlife populations on acreage where it is feasible for them to be enhanced.

All the hunter asks in return is that certain joy of getting out into the woods and meeting the sporting challenge in bagging game. Many more times than not, he's really not all that successful. In a study last year, for instance, it was revealed that only 17 percent of the deer hunters in this state can claim a trophy each year. But the hunter is willing to pay the price, even if it means coming home empty handed.



# Trout by the Basketful



By CURTIS J. BADGER

**G**et two or more saltwater anglers together and the topic of conversation will inevitably turn to fishing and fishing adventures. During the conversation the fish that will dominate much of the discussion will be the grey trout.

The dramatic return of the grey trout during the first half-decade of the seventies has been one of the most talked about fishing phenomena in years. Consider this: In 1969 the winning entry in the grey trout category of the Virginia Salt Water Fishing Tournament weighed in at 4-pounds, 8-ounces. By 1972 the heaviest trout scaled 12-pounds 11-ounces, in three years an increase of more than eight-pounds. In 1974 a state record of 14-pounds 12-ounces was set, and last year the largest grey again reached the 14-pound mark for the third year in a row.

Why the sudden resurgence of the big greys? Theories abound, but no one seems to know for sure. "The fishermen don't know why the greys made such a comeback and neither do the biologists," says Claude Rogers, Director of the Virginia Salt Water Fishing Tournament since its inception in 1958. "The first indication we had that they were coming back was in 1969 when we began taking them at the hotspots of the 1940s in the seaside creeks of the Eastern Shore. The

following spring, cruisers out of Rudee Inlet began catching 300 to 400 a day. Then we knew conclusively that they were back."

It had been more than 20 years since the greys were caught in the sizes and quantities that they were in the early seventies. A state record of 11-pounds 12-ounces was set in 1941 and it held for 30 years, until being broken by a 12-pound 11-ounce fish in 1972. The 1930s and 1940s were good years for greys, but the fish all but disappeared from Virginia waters by the early fifties.

When the greys came back, says Rogers, they showed up in the same spots that produced them 20 years before. One notable exception, though, is the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel which, of course, wasn't even on the drawing boards in the 1940s. The bridge-tunnel is to modern fishermen what Fort Wool was to the fishermen of the thirties and forties. In those days Fort Wool, in the center of Hampton Roads, was the hottest spot for greys in the state. The riprap that made up the island was similar in many respects to the rocks and pilings that make up the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel.

Although greys are available throughout the Chesapeake and in the old seaside haunts of the Eastern Shore, the bridge-tunnel is the undisputed leader in producing large greys. If you cross the 17.6-mile span on any weekend between May and November you'll see an armada of everything from 14-foot outboards to 40-foot diesel powered cruisers so tightly packed you can almost jump from one to the other.

Fishing the bridge-tunnel is an experience in itself. Tides are strong and tricky, making it difficult to get light baits down near the bottom where the fish are. It can also be dangerous, as currents can sweep your boat into rocks or pilings with unexpected swiftness.

The best time to fish is during slack tide — the period between high and low tides when currents are minimal. But winds can create problems too, so use caution when fishing near the rocks and pilings.

Numerous points along the span consistently produce greys, but one of the best spots is the hole on the bayside of the northern island where the depth drops steeply from about 15 feet to over 60 feet. Trout are often concentrated in this 100-yard by 300-yard area.

Artificials that have proven effective for greys include, from left, Sting Ray Grub, Hopkins spoon, Banjo Eye bucktail and Pet Spoon.



In recent years artificial lures have proven to be reliable and popular baits. Many fishermen have had good luck trolling bucktails sweetened with a strip of pork rind. The smallest bucktail that can be kept on the bottom is preferred. Again, strong tides make it difficult to keep a light lure on the bottom in 50 or 60 feet of water.

Other productive grey trout baits are soft plastic jigs and Hopkins lures, but the old reliable two-hooked top and bottom rig baited with slices of squid still yields high catches of greys.

One of the hottest lures last year, says Claude Rogers, was the Sting Ray grub with a piece of peeler crab. "This combination was unbeatable in the area from the Fisherman's Inlet bridge north to the Kiptopeake breakwater to The Cell off Hungar's Creek on the Eastern Shore," he says.

One of the most obvious effects of the grey trout revival, says Rogers, is the tremendous increase in the use of artificials. "In the 1940s," he says, "few fishermen used artificials. Most of them used the conventional two-hook rig baited with peeler crab or mullet. In the 1970s we've seen a tremendous increase in artificials. Our biggest fish are now being caught with bucktails and plastic jigs."

The popularity of artificials is even creeping up into the northern areas of the Chesapeake, where peeler crab has been the standard bill of fare for trout for generations. At Chesapeake trout spots such as Occohannock Rock, Hacks Rock, Crammy Hack, and Stone Rock, the artificials are becoming more and more prevalent in anglers' tackle boxes.

This is not to say that the venerable peeler is obsolete. Many Chesapeake trout fishermen still swear by them, and they are still consistent producers of greys. But at times peelers can be scarce and/or expensive, so the appeal of the artificials is apparent.

For the uninitiated, a word about the peeler crab: the peeler is a Chesapeake Bay Blue Crab at the stage just prior to molting. The old, soon-to-be-discarded outer shell is hard, and the new shell beneath it is pliable but fully formed, and the meat is thick and consistent. When used as bait, the hard outer shell is removed, the swimmerets are discarded, and the crab is cut into sections, each with a rigid joint, or "knuckle", to aid in keeping it on the hook. The conventional peeler rig is a two-hook setup with 1/0 to 4/0 hooks and just enough weight to keep it on the bottom.

As I mentioned earlier, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel is the hottest game in town for the greys. Its rock beds and pilings offer shelter for various marine critters that are consumed by the greys, as well as other fish, and trout are abundant all along the span, particularly in the vicinity of holes and rock piles.

Farther inside the bay there are many areas that have produced greys for generations, and others that have

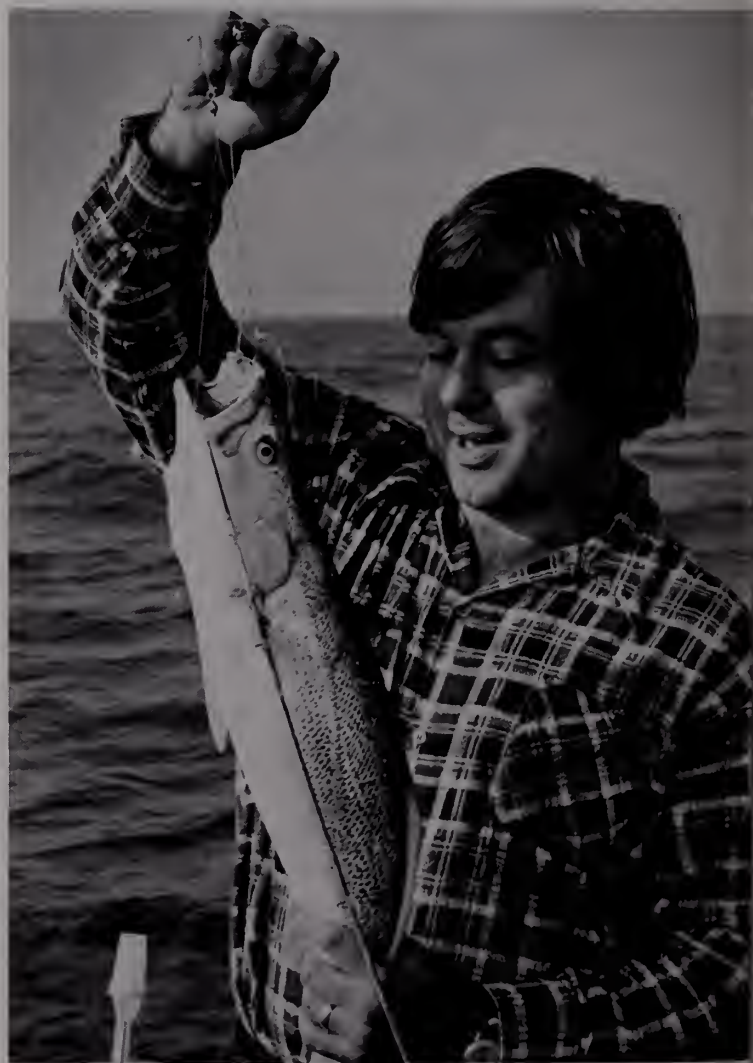
just recently been discovered as a product of the grey trout renaissance of the seventies.

Beginning at the southern end of the bay along the Eastern Shore some of the more popular grey trout grounds include The Rock west of King's Creek near Cape Charles, Little Rock and Big Rock off Smith Beach, The Cell west of Hungar's Creek, Occohannock Rock, Hacks Rock, Ditchbank, Crammy Hack, Stone Rock, Beach Rock, and Robin Hood.

An aid in locating prime spots for greys is the Salt Water Sportfishing and Boating Guide published by Alexandria Drafting Company. The guide shows the location of these and numerous other popular areas. Available at most marinas and tackle shops, it offers a wealth of information for the fisherman, including charts, tide tables, and directories of fishing areas, marinas, motels, camping facilities, plus much more.

According to Claude Rogers, the big greys will be back in numbers again this year. And as for theories as to why they've made such a spectacular revival, I'm going to leave that for the experts to ponder. I'm going fishing.

Bill Sterling, sports editor of The Eastern Shore News, caught this big grey last fall near Cedar Island on the Eastern Shore.







# A Quail's Best Friend

By E. M. CASSELLS

**B**ass and I have hunted quail together one or more days a week during the season in Madison County for the past few years. The quail population has not exactly been decimated by our efforts. On every trip at least one and usually a lot more things go wrong.

Take the dog situation. Bass has a setter named Whitey who is an absolute expert at finding birds in Greene County when you are hunting in Madison. He will hold them beautifully until you come into view—then he pounces on them and sends them out of sight and into cover where they are almost always unfindable.

My dog, Buster, has a completely different temperament. If he gets more than fifty yards away from me he is stricken with loneliness and comes back to nuzzle my pants leg.

This brings me to the unsatisfactory method by which Bass and I find most of our coveys. I have a bad back and have to sit down and rest fairly often. Since Bass passed three score and ten several years ago he is usually not too reluctant to join me. While Whitey is exploring some distant mountaintop I sit down and Bass comes over to join me. Buster, always game for this sort of activity rushes in and lies down between us. Then, you guessed it, a covey gets up behind us and by the time we get to our feet we can see the last few birds tilt their wings as they drop into the thick pines or heavy honeysuckle where Buster won't go on a bet. Meanwhile, Whitey continues his solitary pursuits in parts unknown. It's hard to admit but we sit on a lot more coveys than we see over a pointing dog.

Things aren't always this bad though. There are times when we get really good dog work. Take the time year before last when we were coming out of a cornfield and both dogs locked on point into a honeysuckle covered fencerow. There was no way for one of us to get on the other side because the nearest opening was several hundred yards away and the growth on the fence was impenetrable. Nothing to do but kick the fencerow and hope. We kept saying later that we never heard such a big covey of birds. We never had the vaguest idea where they went.

Sometimes we actually do get to shoot at quail. That's where the real trouble begins. Take the time Whitey pointed a covey we were thoroughly familiar with because we had sat on it several times and it was only about two hundred yards away. We arrived on the scene only slightly out of breath. Buster backed beautifully and we moved up behind the dogs. Thirty quail boiled into the air and headed straight for us. We wheeled and each fired three times. Six dead birds and twenty-four live ones flew on across the river and into the woods. No wonder those dogs don't do much for us. We hardly do anything for them.

On the last day of the season in 1973 we had spent our time doing everything wrong as usual. It was about 4:30 in the afternoon and we were standing in the middle of a field trying to get a glimpse of Whitey who had left us for parts unknown about an hour previously. Buster, sensing that we were about to sit down came over to join us. Just as we were about to sit down Buster came to a rock-solid point between us and the angle of his head indicated the birds were between us too. On second thought there was no way a covey could be there. We were less than ten feet apart and had been standing in about the same position for five minutes. I was sure that Buster had decided to wind up this distinguished season with a point on a rabbit. With my gun held loosely in my left hand I strolled in front of the dog and kicked a small clump of honeysuckle. How that many birds had gotten into such a small space I don't know but the noise sent Bass and me three feet into the air. When we came down we were in no condition to cope with a shotgun and not one feather came to earth.

Well, I guess you can see how I thought up the title for this story. However, if you're sympathetically heading for your freezer to get out some birds and send them to us, don't. Occasionally we do get a quail or two on a covey rise and sometimes we step on singles or manage to shoot them before we have a chance to think the situation through and mess it up. We do love the fresh air and exercise and the dogs are very pleasant company--particularly at lunch.

# STRATEGY FOR PICKEREL

By DWIGHT L. PETERSON

On certain days I have watched the surface portion of water vegetation move like ghostly gusts of wind treading silent paths through the green. But there would be no wind. Then, near my position and in a small area clear of vegetation, a dark form glides within sight beneath the surface. Sunrays penetrate the partially clear water and the dark form takes shape. The body is long and moves with stealth and certainty. The head is long, somewhat flat, and bony looking. Near the base and somewhat atop of the head are two piercing eyes that would strike fear within the stoutest of this predator's natural prey. He pauses and sulks a little toward the bottom. I watch the gill covers flare in and out with a pumping rhythm like that of a silent heartbeat. He turns slightly and the sunlight strikes the dark green chain-like markings on its side. These are the markings that aid in the identification of this species of fish. He is the *chain pickerel*.

The chain pickerel (*Esox niger*) is often described as a lurker; a predator that prowls the weed beds and quiet water in search of food. The mouth is equipped with needle sharp teeth and once the prey is seized, the game of life is over for the captive. Many fishermen say he is born hungry and dies hungry, lashing out at any movement or live prey that passes too close. Another descriptive word often used is *voracious*, which means greedy in eating; very eager.

I am very fond of this fish called the chain pickerel, or jack; and feel that much of the descriptive narrative dealing with him is entirely too harsh. It's like reading legendary stories of swamp monsters. He is a freshwater fish and it is admitted that he is a fearsome sight when staring you eye to eye. It is the wise fisherman that uses pliers to remove a hook

from that meat-ripping mouth. (Also watch those naked fingers you might run up through the gills).

All fish have their moments of feeding, resting, or whatever. During these feeding sprees it is a sick fish that does not possess a greedy, eager attitude. It is the lucky fisherman that happens to be at the right place at the right time. The chain pickerel also has his moments. The only difference could be the huge appetite of which the chain pickerel is accused. These fishless days have given me reason to doubt this. He can be just as hard to fool or lure to a bait, natural or artificial, as any other fish.

Considering the matter of gluttony, I again compare the chain pickerel and largemouth. I once caught a chain pickerel while using minnows for bait. When cleaning him I found he had two other fish inside him, and one was hand size. On another occasion I was also using minnows for bait and caught a largemouth that had a large fish inside him. But to top it off, I saw a foot protruding up into the mouth. Pulling on the foot I withdrew a bird about the size of an English sparrow.

The chain pickerel is predaceous and carnivorous. These words point toward the savage side of this fish. And I agree that he is a savage and worthy opponent, in spite of the accusation that he is good only for a rush or two when hooked. He is a good fighter with few exceptions. One exception is a female laden with eggs. She does seem to possess a certain sluggishness when caught, and seems to be more of a puller than jumper.

Other exceptions have to do with water temperature. I do not claim accuracy for water temperature I have taken while fishing for the chain pickerel because they are mainly for my own interest and curiosity.

The best water temperature for chain pickerel activity seems to be about 55 to 70 degrees F. Within these temperatures he will move a greater distance to take a bait and will give a better fight. Below 55 degrees he begins to pick up a sluggish attitude. The distance he will move for bait becomes shorter and the fight becomes less aggressive. As the temperature moves above 70 the distance he will move to take a bait again becomes less, but there seems to be no noticeable difference in aggressiveness when caught.

Finding exact water temperatures, and setting exact locations as to where they can be found, or feeding, at certain times is a difficult task. Activity factors will probably differ, to some extent, from one region to another. If anyone would try to state definite findings it would take a book, and would have to include barometric pressures and other factors.

What I have learned, so far, about water temperatures and the chain pickerel leads me to believe that he is very sensitive to temperature changes. I feel the reason for these differing temperature ranges connects directly to the chain pickerel's sensitivity. He can be caught all year so his adjustment to the change of water temperature is evident. As water temperature





A happy angler looks with satisfaction at the feisty pickerel he landed.

drops, metabolism slows down. But adjustment could be the key word. I have noticed, as I stated before, that he becomes sluggish below 55 degrees. But. . . if the temperature stays constant, say about 50 degrees, for three to five days, he overcomes some sluggishness.

The chain pickerel is basically a shallow, quiet-water fish. The fisherman should not be surprised if he waylays a lure in water barely deep enough to cover him. However, do not overlook deeper water. This is especially true during the hotter, or colder days. He moves about, like other fish, seeking the ideal comfort temperature. Science has established the preferred temperature for the pike family at about 65 degrees. This can vary a few degrees, up or down, depending upon region. Available food and oxygen content in the water is another factor involved with movement or location. So, thinking in terms of these movements, the fisherman should not overlook swift water. During hot summer weather, I have hooked him with artificials and drifting minnows in swift sections of streams.

The fisherman can feel confident about finding the chain pickerel during spring and autumn. When the water temperature is 45 to 50 degrees, the female be-

gins to exude some 20,000 plus eggs on underwater vegetation and brush in the shallow, quiet-water areas. Naturally, the males are following. These are the areas of normal habitat with a good supply of logs, brush and vegetation. Although I have found live bait best, it will pay to try both artificials and live bait during these seasons. In summer, try to get to these areas during early morning, late evening, cloudy days and when shaded while other available water is in direct sunlight.

In another vein of thought, the fisherman can prey on the angry nature of this fish. This approach does not lead to constant success but it is worth a try. The chain pickerel, when in a hungry mood, will strike a lure sometimes as many as three times on a normal retrieve. There are times when he will take it on a second or third cast after a miss on the first. If he is hungry, he will usually get it. But what if he is not hungry. . . just angry? Watch your lure as you retrieve. If you see a flash and the lure is suddenly about one to five feet over to the side of the last sighting, that rascal has probably slapped it with his tail. Don't give up too quickly. Make several casts in the same spot. Also, if you are in an area where you know you have consistently caught this fish, try casting several times in the same spot over and over again. I have tried this many times over the past years and my record, so far, stands at thirteen casts in the same spot, using the same lure, before getting a strike and hooking the fish.

The matter of baits to use for chain pickerel fishing can be broad, but choice baits can be narrowed to a few words. For live bait, I prefer live minnows (shiners). They should be very lively and two to five inches in length. When thinking of spoons and spinners, think of red and white color combinations. Next would be red and yellow. These colors should be considered when thinking of plugs. But fish-like plugs are best when they are exactly that. . . fish-like, with plenty of action. Nine out of ten times the fast retrieve is best. In normal habitat water, from a few inches to about ten feet in depth, more fish will be caught from surface down to about two feet. This should be your retrieve depth for artificials and two feet is a good average depth for live bait (minnows). If you think the fish are in deeper water during a hot or cold day, naturally you should rig for deeper fishing.

The choice of method for catching the chain pickerel is up to you. But remember one thing; you're after a number one game fish that stands at the top in many categories. Many fishermen rate him fair when it comes down to the eating category, but I would have to raise him a little higher. Maybe I should give a word of warning concerning this; watch the hair-like "Y" bones.

# Personalities

By F. N. Satterlee



**GARLAND A. FOSTER**, Warden, Prince George County

Guinea Mills, Virginia, a tiny farming community in Cumberland County, was where Garland Reid Foster was born and where his father operated a general farm. While Garland was still quite young, the family moved to another farm in Buckingham County and it was in this rural setting that the young Foster did most of his early growing up. After attending Buckingham Central High School through his junior year, Garland went to live with his sister on Brandon Farm in Prince George County. While there, he attended and graduated from Disputanta High School.

Following graduation he continued to work on Brandon Farm as he had done during the summers and at vacation time since moving there.

It was during this period of his life that he began to really be aware of the outdoors. For, not only was he actively working outside as a farmer, but also he was able, and did, spend much of his free time hunting on Brandon Farm.

In August of 1945 he was drafted into the U. S. Army and served with the 303rd Infantry Division until being sent overseas with the Army of Occupation, when he was assigned to the 252nd Engineer Combat Battalion.

After being discharged in January of 1947, he returned to Prince George County and to work on Brandon Farm. In March of 1952 he was accepted as a Game Warden with the Virginia Game Commission and was assigned to work in Prince George County.

Meeting people and working with the sportsmen and women of the Commonwealth and especially the young people is one of the most satisfying aspects of his work as a warden. He believes in strict adherence to the law and that one of the best methods of preventing violations is through the education process.

Garland's wife is the former Evelyn Padgett of Surry Courthouse, Virginia. Evelyn and Garland have four children and the family lives at Prince George Courthouse.



# Drumming Log

By Mel White

## VIRGINIA STATE TURKEY CALLING CHAMPIONSHIP HELD

On October 17, 1976 the first annual Virginia State Turkey Calling Championship was held in the James Wood High School auditorium in Winchester.

Winner and new Virginia state champ is a Winchester resident, Bob Bupp. Second place was taken by Dickie Corbin of Berryville, and third place finisher was Allen Boyd, also of Winchester. These men were chosen from a select field of nineteen callers from throughout the state by a panel of four judges which included Virginia state biologists and turkey experts Kit Shaffer and Jack Gwynn.

The non-resident division was won by Dick Smith of Blain, Pennsylvania, and the junior division title, 16 and under, was

taken by thirteen year-old Ed Fleisher of Thompsettown, Pennsylvania.

The contest was sponsored by the Virginia State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation and was witnessed by

an appreciative crowd of almost one-thousand people. Many of the top callers in Virginia and in the Eastern U. S. were on hand to participate.



## NEW PUBLIC HUNTING AREAS ESTABLISHED

The Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries and officials of the Georgia-Pacific Corporation have jointly announced that 17,492 acres of corporation-owned land will be open to public access for the 1976 general hunting season.

As a direct result of a memorandum of understanding between cooperating organizations, Virginia's sportsmen will be permitted to hunt a number of designated tracts in four south Piedmont counties. The locations and combined acreages of the tracts are as follows: southeast Dinwiddie County (7,211 acres); northwest Greensville County (6,890 acres); northeast Brunswick County (3,033 acres); and a small tract of 358 acres in the western section of Sussex County. All land involved is located in that section of the Commonwealth where the four counties converge. Principal game species present are deer and quail.

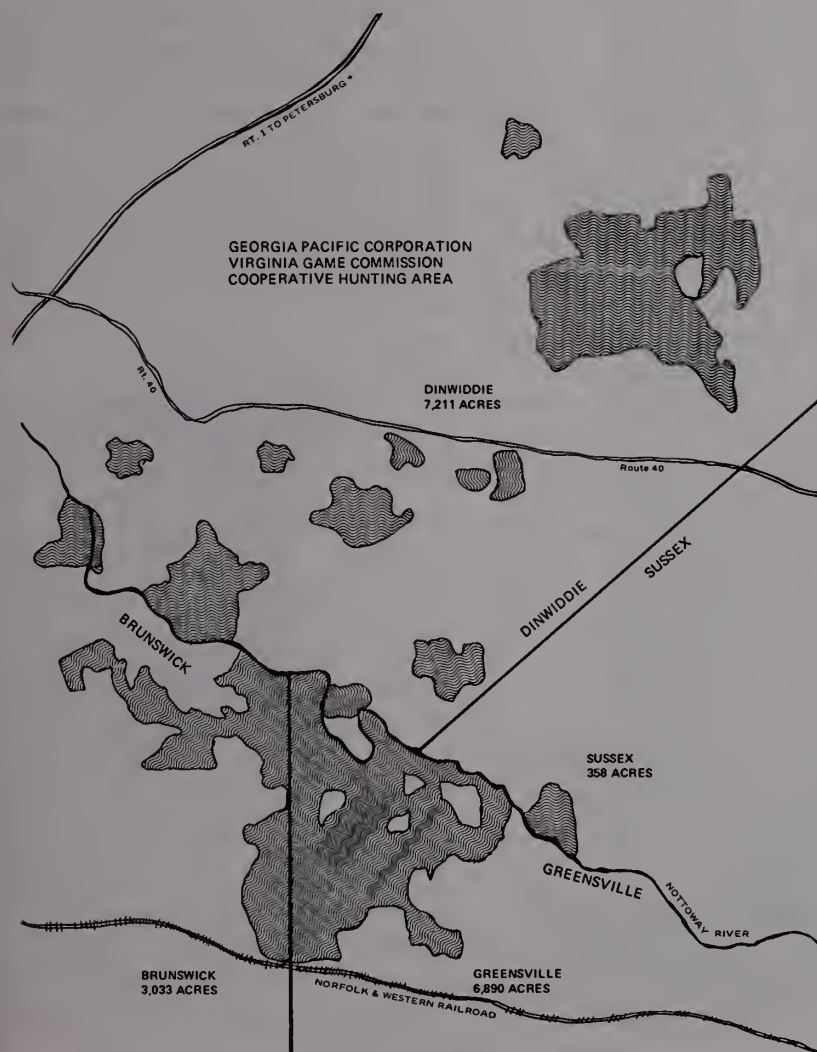
The tracts of land to be opened will be designated with the traditional Georgia-Pacific blue and white diamond-shaped signs and the Game Commission's green-on-white public hunting signs. The boundaries will be painted with international orange paint.

As a direct result of this public-spirited action by the Georgia-Pacific Corporation, sportsmen may hunt this land without charge and without the usual company permits. Valid Virginia hunting licenses will be required and the Game Commission's game warden staff will patrol the areas.

Hunters must observe a corporation policy which prohibits overnight camping. On occasion in the future, there may be timber cutting operations on several of the tracts. These will then be posted with red work area signs and must be treated by hunters as off-limit wildlife sanctuaries.

Individual hunters utilizing the areas are urged to be careful with fires, to avoid littering the environment and to be respectful of gates, access roads, and adjacent landowners. Sportsmen utilizing public hunting areas are reminded that their conduct will largely govern the future of cooperative agreements in Virginia.

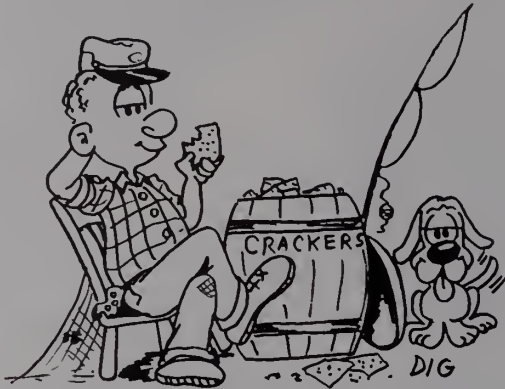
## NEW PUBLIC HUNTING AREAS



# IT APPEARS TO ME...

## A Conglomeration of Comments, Cumshaw and Cogitation

### & BY CURLY &



...A PERSON OUGHT TO HAVE ONE!

**ATTENTION Horseless Carriage Drivers!!** you should be aware of an interesting publication entitled "Cost of Owning and Operating an Automobile--1976." In the booklet you will find such 'goodies', as the facts pertaining to the taxes and operating costs that can be expected if you keep your 1976 standard size auto for a period of 10 years. This little gem is available from the Office of Public Affairs, Federal Highway Administration, HPA-1, Washington, D. C. 20590.

Winchester-Western has produced two new pamphlets which are designed to clarify their position on crime and gun control. These timely publications which are entitled "Winchester Views Crime and Gun Control" and "Winchester Views Hunting: The Freshening Tradition", are available Free (in single copies) by writing to the following address: Winchester-Western Division of Olin, Department PP(SA) 275 Winchester Ave., New Haven, Conn. 06504.

**THE WILDLIFE FEDERATION** has come up with another free goodie as a follow-on to their immensely successful publication "Invite Wildlife..." which was pub-

lished in 1973. This newest pamphlet, "A Pool for the Backyard" outlines, in easy to follow instructions, the procedure for building a concrete pool (complete with circulating pump which can serve as a watering station for birds). Request the booklet from National Wildlife Federation, Department No. 121-S, 1412 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036.

**TURKEY BUFFS** Note: The National Wild Turkey Federation has recently introduced the first annual wild turkey stamp as a fund-raising and investment venture. Designed by Floridian artist Russ Smiley, the colorful stamp features the Florida wild turkey, Osceola. Pictured below the stamp sells for \$3.00. All of the tax-deductible proceeds will go toward the education, restoration and purchase of wild turkey habitat. Direct your purchase requests to: Wild Turkey Stamp, P.O. Box 467, Edgefield, S. C. 29824.



...AND FOR YOUR BOOK SHELF (or your Christmas list)

**DISMAL SWAMP** aficionados take heed!! The Audubon Naturalist Society has available a delightful and gently-done booklet called quite naturally enough, "The Great Dismal Swamp." Authored by Brooke Meanly the 48 page publication is a storehouse of information on all aspects of the 'Dismal' including plants, birds, turtles, snakes and frogs, the geography and butterflies. It's available for \$2.75. Ask for 'Great Dismal Swamp'/Dept. FS, Audubon Naturalist Society, 8940 Jones Mill Road, Washington, D. C. 20015.

**PRICES BEING** what they are for all types of heating energy, old (and new) wood-burning stoves are enjoying great popularity. With that in mind you, Bill-Payers, and aren't we all, might be interested in Larry Gay's book called "Heating With Wood." Within the 124 pages of this publication Gay covers the types of wood and the heat that can be expected from each, the stoves that are available and much more. Priced at \$3.50, the book is available from Garden Way Publishing Co., Charlotte, Vermont 05445.

...AND THEN

**TOLL FREE TELEPHONE SERVICE** is now in operation from anywhere within the Commonwealth which provides access to information pertaining to programs and services available to persons with hearing disabilities. Contact with the Virginia Council for the Deaf is available at no charge by dialing 1-800/552-7917. The type of information which may be obtained includes the availability and location of interpreters, services available to deaf persons in your area and the location and schedule of Sign Language classes.



# Growing Up Outdoors

Edited by GAIL HACKMAN

## WINTER GIFTS FOR WILDLIFE

This year, as Christmas approaches, why don't you think about a gift you can give the birds around your home? Most feeders can be simple, and made at home.

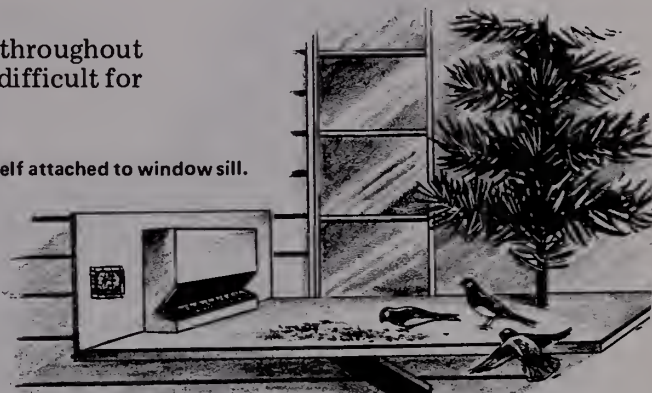
Suet, which can be obtained from a butcher, can be melted down on the stove (slowly at about 200°), and then mixed with any number of ingredients (peanut butter, seeds, raisins, chopped peanuts, or sunflower seeds) and shaped into many attractive feeders which can be hung in trees. As pictured, a small lean-to shelter can provide an ideal feeding place for quail, or just a simple feeding tray on a windowsill can bring the birds flocking to your home.

If you want to feed small animals as well, hammer several strong spike nails through a piece of board. Stick an ear of corn on each spike and place the board securely in a tree limb, or on a fence post. Apples placed on the ground are very attractive food for deer or raccoon.

Remember though, just feeding wildlife once during a year will not get them through a cold winter.

Continue your project throughout the winter, when food is difficult for animals and birds to find.

Food shelf attached to window sill.

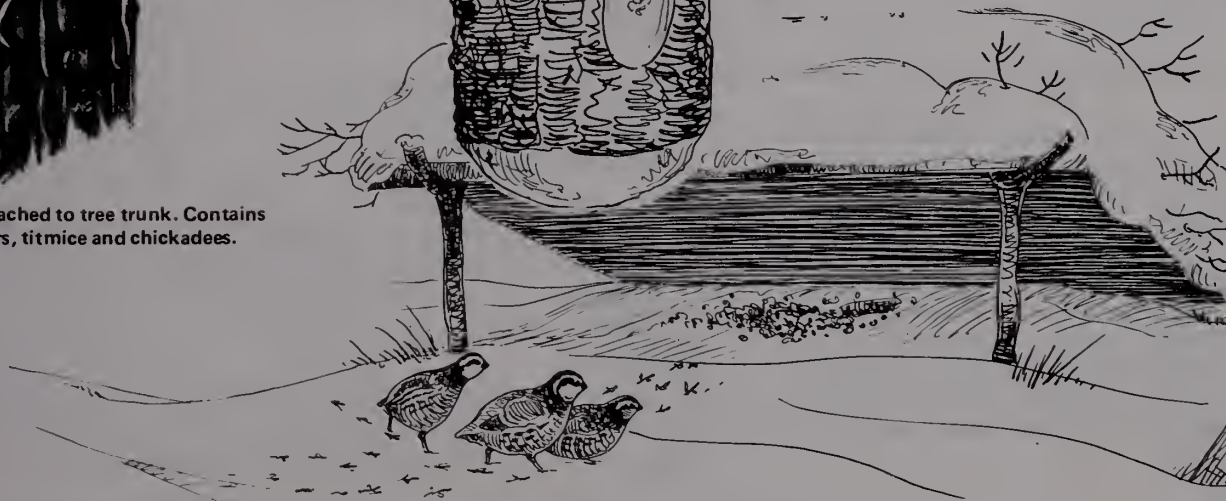


Cocoanut larder filled with melted suet, seeds, chopped peanuts or chopped cocoanut meat. Cocoanut is covered with wire or netting.

Peanut Butter Stick (Stick may also be filled with suet.)



Soap-dish feeder attached to tree trunk. Contains suet for woodpeckers, titmice and chickadees.



Simple lean-to shelter attracts a covey of quail.

# On The Waterfront

## WEATHER SIGNALS

When potentially dangerous wind or sea conditions exist or are forecast, storm signals are displayed. These include small craft, gale, storm and hurricane warnings. Small craft warnings are directed to craft of many sizes and designs. Do not set out in storm warnings unless the boat can handle the conditions forecast. Check with local weather stations, coast guard radio or weather bureau broadcasts (162.55 MegaHertz) for the latest weather forecast. Also check local weather and sea conditions.

When afloat watch for these signs of dangerous weather ahead:

1. Dark, threatening clouds may indicate a squall or thunderstorm.
2. Watch for a steady increase in wind or sea. Pay special attention to increasing winds blowing against a strong tide. Steep waves may form, capable of capsizing a boat.
3. Heavy static on the AM radio may indicate thunderstorms nearby.
4. Always check radio weather broadcasts and warnings.

Fog can be a serious threat to the boater. It forms frequently in coastal waters especially during the summer. Fog may reduce visibility to only a few feet. Landmarks and navigational aids disappear. At first sign of fog, the boater should proceed to buoy. If practical he could then return to port.

It is wise to record compass course and time between buoys upon departure and return to harbor. This easy reference may someday help avoid disaster.

## HUNTING AND WATER SAFETY

As in fishing, falls overboard and capsizing in remote places are major potential hazards for hunters on the water.

Before starting out, check the weather. Line squalls occur mostly during the hunting season. Judge the weight of your equipment to prevent overloading the boat. Carry one U. S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device for each person in the boat.

Always remain seated while shooting in an open boat and it is best to remain seated going to and returning from a duck blind. Your chances of bagging game are much better and the stability of the boat is increased one-hundred percent. Know your gun's recoil so you won't be surprised or knocked over by a sudden movement in the boat. Never anchor your boat over the stern as the weight of your motor tends to hold your transom down.

If caught in rough weather put on life preservers, remain seated in the center of the boat. If an accident happens, stay with the boat. Do not try to swim to shore. Grab anything, such as an ice chest, oar or paddle that you can hang onto. Anything that floats gives you added buoyancy and will help to keep you afloat. Do not remove your boots or any of your clothing. The water that gets into your clothing and boots has a tendency to get warm from the body heat and will help to keep your blood circulating. Keep your legs moving and if all possible remain with the boat.

## COLDER THAN YOU THINK

Beware of the wind and its tricks. Cold is increased greatly by the wind. It may be 40 degrees outside with the sun shining, but a 10 mph wind will lower the temperature to 28 degrees. A 20 mph wind will reduce the temperature from 40 degrees to 18 degrees. Be careful, most cases of hypothermia develop in air temperature between 30 and 50 degrees.

It is often difficult to tell when someone begins to develop hypo-

## HYPOTHERMIA CHART

If The Water Temp. (F) is . . . .	Exhaustion Or Unconsciousness	Expected Time Of Survival is . .
32.5	Under 15 minutes	Under 15-45 minutes
32.5 - 40.0	15 - 30 minutes	30 - 90 minutes
40 - 50	30 - 60 minutes	1 - 3 hours
50 - 60	1 - 2 hours	1 - 6 hours
60 - 70	2 - 7 hours	2 - 40 hours
70 - 80	3 - 12 hours	3 - indefinitely
over 80	indefinitely	





thermia. It is most difficult to know if you are developing hypothermia yourself because your senses are becoming dulled.

Appoint a foul-weather leader in your group to call it a day before the least protected member becomes exhausted and cold.

To detect hypothermia, watch for these signs: uncontrollable shivering, fumbling hands, frequent stumbling, a lurching walk, vague slow speech, drowsiness or apparent exhaustion.

To treat hypothermia, get the victim out of the cold. Even if symptoms are mild, give the victim warm drinks, strip off all wet clothing. Get the victim into dry clothes and warm sleeping bag. If the victim is semi-conscious or worse, try to keep the victim awake. Skin to skin contact is a very effective way to pass heat. Strip off all wet clothing and put the victim in a sleeping bag with another stripped person. If you can, put the victim between two warm donors.

### Warning Display Signals

<b>SMALL CRAFT*</b>	<b>DAYTIME:</b> Red Pennant. <b>NIGHTTIME:</b> Red Light Over White Light.
	Indicates: Forecast winds as high as 33 knots and sea conditions considered dangerous to small-craft operations.
<b>GALE</b>	<b>DAYTIME:</b> Two Red Pennants. <b>NIGHTTIME:</b> White Light Over Red Light.
	Indicates: Forecast winds in the range 34-47 knots.
<b>STORM</b>	<b>DAYTIME:</b> Square Red Flag With Black Square Centered. <b>NIGHTTIME:</b> Two Red Lights.
	Indicates: Forecast winds 48 knots and above no matter how high the wind speed. If the winds are associated with a tropical cyclone (hurricane), storm warnings indicate forecast winds of 48-63 knots.
<b>HURRICANE</b>	<b>DAYTIME:</b> Two Square Red Flags With Black Squares Centered. <b>NIGHTTIME:</b> White Light Between Two Red Lights.
	Indicates: Forecast winds of 64 knots and above displayed only in connection with a hurricane.



# The Pine Siskin



By J. W. TAYLOR

**T**hough not uncommon, the pine siskin is one of our least known birds. Its dusky, drab plumage dooms it to obscurity. The heavily streaked pattern, dark brown over a dull ochre base, blends into any environment, attracts little attention. The sulphur yellow patch in the outspread wing provides a touch of color, but is hardly conspicuous.

In character, however, siskins are anything but self-effacing. They roam about in happy, carefree bands, usually composed of a dozen or so individuals, chattering continuously. Not even sub-zero weather chills their spirits.

Their cheery voices reveal a close kinship to the goldfinch. There is the same happy lilt, the same canary-like quality. Some of their calls are nearly identical to those of the goldfinch, but one note, a high pitched "shreee," belongs uniquely to the siskin.

In Virginia, the siskin is classified as "an irregular winter visitor." Better to call it an "erratic wanderer." In some years it is present in good numbers; in others,

totally absent. It may be plentiful in some localities, yet missing in similar habitat nearby. There are periodic "invasions" when they are especially abundant.

To the author's knowledge, there are no definite breeding records for the pine siskin in Virginia. It is likely, though, that the species does nest from time to time in the higher portions of the State, since nests have been found in the mountains of North Carolina, and young birds have been discovered just to the north in Maryland. Further testifying to this possibility are records of siskins during July and June on White Top Mountain and in western Rockingham County.

Those looking for proof of such nesting should scour the high altitude conifer stands. Hemlocks, spruce or pine are essential to any potential breeding ground. Siskins retain this partiality to evergreens in winter, though at that season they may be found anywhere, even in open country if food is scarce.

The pine siskin is the American counterpart of the Eurasian siskin. Another race inhabits the mountains of Mexico. Thus, in one form or another, siskins may be found throughout the major portion of three continents.

are still going to be hurting the following season when the loan has to be paid back. Such national problems as the recent gas shortage can also curtail your business for a season.

Physical fitness is a "must" for most outdoor careers. How would it be if you had a heart condition and offered to guide bass fishermen in your boat that happened to become grounded on a sandbar. You would have to ask your clients to wade and get the boat loose; but there is a good chance that your clients may have heart conditions also--this is one reason they hired you!

By the same token, you may be required to dive into water 15 feet deep to get a boat anchor unfastened, or perhaps row back to shore when your outboard motor fails to operate. Even chopping wood for a campfire is hard work for those who are used to sitting at a desk all day pushing only a pencil. Still, if you can take it, each day will end with a good physically-tired feeling that will enable you to sleep like a log during the night. You will awake with a rested-relaxed feeling in the morning that will make you feel like a million bucks. Then you're on your way again for another day in the outdoors, where you will tax your body until it hurts doing what you like to do the most.

The person who makes guiding his profession has to have an education; not necessarily a formal one, but his knowledge of backwoods engineering has to be tops. He has to know what plants are poisonous, which are edible, what to do in case of snakebite, and dozens of other problems which are likely to be encountered. For people with the proper knowledge, most can be taken lightly and the problem solved immediately with little or no harm to anyone. On the other hand, improper knowledge of even "minor" outdoor problems could be fatal. Still, working in the outdoors is much safer than crossing many city streets or driving on the free-way.

If you're responsible for guiding persons on hunting, fishing, or camping trips, you owe them knowledge of the terrain you'll be covering, game regulations, any known dangers, first aid, and photography to mention a few. You'll have to know that the plant one of your clients gathered from a surface spring to eat as water cress is really poisonous water hemlock and warn him against it. That "dumb" raccoon that walks right into camp could have rabies. You have to be able to recognize these signs and know what to do.

No, the work of the outdoor guide is not all peaches and cream, but for the person who applies himself intelligently, a rich reward can be the end result from a job afield that makes real dollars and sense.

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*Winter is a handmade coverlet  
With muted patchwork shades of brown.  
Unique patterns, no square is alike,  
Each patch is a story stitched into snow.  
Winds may stir the blanket of ice,  
Or shadows of clouds mute the hues-  
But cuddled beneath the frozen comforter-  
Resting for a time, snuggles spring.*

